

2006 HONOREE

Connie Heitzmann

Bay Catholic Elementary School, Bay Saint Louis, MS
Early Childhood Elementary Education • Kindergarten



Years Teaching: 32

Average Class Size: 24

Classes Taught Per Day: 7

School's % of ESL Students: 0%

School Type: Parochial, Other

Type of Class: Self-contained

“A sense of joy is vital to my personal and professional life. As a wife, mother, and elementary school teacher, I know how important it is to share this gift of joy. I feel that education unlocks the door of life. Joy is at the foundation of my teaching career. My philosophy is one of vision and hope, of what can be, and how to get there. I want my students to hold their heads high and know that each of them can make a difference. Hurricane Katrina devastated our community but not our spirit. I’ve always felt that one should teach as an extension of life. There’ll always be tests, approved ways to live and accountability. This is not exclusive to the classroom, so the real question is how to maintain creativity and imagination as we live. Teaching to me is not an occupation I chose, but a profession that is an expression of my life.”

“As an educator, I have been given many tools and my imagination is foremost among them. Creativity is a gift we all have inside. It has to be drawn out like the bean plant in the classroom window and nurtured to adulthood. A teacher’s advantage is time if we choose wisely, and the opportunity – if we care to capture it – to impact the future.



If it takes making puppets out of sticks or boxes and placing it on the hand of a shy child who can now speak in front of his or her peers, that is what I’ll do.”

“Normal terms of admiration don’t describe Connie. I’d add ‘exceedingly sensitive, joyful, and maternally wise’ to the usual ‘inspiring, dedicated, and visionary.’ She is an active, energetic person who embodies the spirit that ‘actions speak louder than words.’ Her actions challenge our view of the world. Through music and song, Connie touches the spirit of her students and teaches them that music knows no language. Connie incorporates the right balance of love, work, and play into her classroom to grow each young spirit that she educates. Connie doesn’t just think outside the box...she lives there.”

— *Suzi Hand,*
parent of former student

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

Honored International Video Publicist - Millennium Young People’s Congress (2000) • Distinguished Teacher Award - National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) (1999) • Making Mississippi Move Award for Innovative Programs - Mississippi Municipal Association (1997) • Guest Performer - Celebration of Hope International Concert (1996) • Teacher of the Year - Hancock County Rotary (1993) • Teacher of the Month - Hancock County Rotary (1993) • Mother’s Award - Eagle Scout (1991) • Who’s Who American Teacher • Participant, Governor’s Board Research Team for All-Day Kindergartens (1980s)