

2006 HONOREE

## Bill Reilly

Bethlehem Central Middle School, Delmar, NY  
Middle School Humanities Education • 6th Grade Social Studies



**Years Teaching:** 22

**Average Class Size:** 23

**Classes Taught Per Day:** 6

**School's % of ESL Students:** 2%

**School Type:** Public, Suburban

**Type of Class:** Inclusion

“My students learn about early civilizations by constructing ‘The Museum of Ancient Inquiry.’ Each student must first choose a ‘major’ or focus of learning. They gain knowledge about their chosen ‘fields of expertise’ by researching facts in a variety of books and guided Internet searches. As they gather information, they produce a question regarding an ancient technology or process and design a museum exhibit that answers their question. Their exhibit will contain replicated artifacts along with information to answer their inquiry. This information can take the form of a written display, student actors, interactive exhibits, or technological models. They must explain how their display provides sufficient information for the lay people (parents) who will visit their museum. Upon completion of the process, students are tested on the knowledge gained in the museum, which they helped to construct. Such projects provide many of the same skills that a standard research paper would, while engaging students at a much higher interest level. It provides for greater pride in student accomplishments and establishes a longer-lasting interest in the content.”

“As an archaeologist, technology specialist, and foremost as a sixth-grade social studies teacher, my goal is to provide a broad-based enriching educational experience which incorporates ‘real-world’ learning and includes the latest technological initiatives to create life-long learners with a passion for their



planet and its remarkable cultures. I have always believed that teaching must extend beyond the walls of my classroom and stretch the horizons of my students’ imaginations – whether its coordinating an international Web site for peace, meeting with a United Nations representative from Zimbabwe, or funding the construction of an orphanage.”

“Bill Reilly is unlike any teacher I have ever met. He loves teaching, as many teachers do. However, for Bill, teaching does not stop when he leaves the classroom. He struggles to open the eyes of his students to the world around them. Now here I am, nine years after leaving his class. I am in my junior year of college, currently pursuing my degree in Secondary Education with a concentration in Social Studies. My freshman year of college, I was asked to write a five-page essay explaining why I wanted to teach. My entire essay was about Bill Reilly.”

– former student

### OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

Selected by the U.S. State Department’s American Councils to serve in Azerbaijan for their Eurasian/American teacher exchange (2004)