



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

James Becker Thomson Award for Excellence in Special Education

Ross S. Sterling High School teacher Jennifer Malpass demonstrates her passion for teaching and her loyalty to the district by volunteering before and after school to work with special education students. She does not hesitate to help others in her department as well as volunteering at other campuses if the need arises. She also works with agencies and program outside the school to promote academic and social skills for her students.

That passion for teaching was among the reasons she was nominated for this year's James Becker Thomson Award that is presented annually to a Goose Creek CISD teacher for excellence in special education. Dr. Richard Thomson established the award in honor of his brother, James.

Jennifer grew up in Baytown, attending Austin and Crockett elementary schools, Gentry Junior School, and graduating from Lee High School in 1990.

Growing up, she says, she always wanted to be a teacher. "I was intrigued by the Deaf Ministry at our church and really felt that Deaf Education was the career path I wanted to follow," she said. "Little did I know that an invitation to San Marcos, Texas would send me down a different path in education."

Upon graduating from high school, Church Russell, a family friend, invited Jennifer to attend the Special Olympic State Games in San Marcos as a chaperone for the Goose Creek Team.

"What an experience," she said.

While staying in the dorms at Texas State, Jennifer observed so many new things: individuals from state schools, group homes and school districts. She admits be naïve to the wide range of disabilities that some individuals live with.

"I was amazed at the abilities those same individuals demonstrated and the joy and excitement with which they conquered the tasks at hand," she said. "The part of the trip that caught my attention most was the skills that were being taught off the track and field. The skills the coaches and chaperones never stopped teaching, no matter the setting; skills that encouraged independence, appropriate behavior and self help."



Jennifer Malpass
Ross S. Sterling High School

Jennifer said that's all it took. "I knew I wanted to head down the path of special education."

She attended East Texas Baptist in the fall of 1990 until John (her husband of almost 20 years) asked her to marry him. She returned to Baytown to get married, and attended Lee College in the spring before transferring to Lamar University where she continued studying education and special education.

She graduated from Lamar University with her degree in special education in 1994.

While attending Lee College and Lamar, Jennifer was a substitute teacher for Goose Creek and coached Special Olympics.

She began her Goose Creek CISD career at Horace Mann Junior School as a teacher in the Life Skills class.

Two years later, she moved to Sterling where she has continued to teach a Self Contained Life Skills class.

"Teaching Special Education is very rewarding in that you get to assist students in developing socially, emotionally, and vocationally, fostering skills that have a lifelong impact," she said. "Because the special education classroom is often a smaller setting, we experience a bond with our students and the pleasure of celebrating progress with our students and their families."

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