

## Teaching from the heart in Chinook's Edge

The world, including the world of teaching, has changed significantly in the last few years. Shifting priorities has required a re-jigging for many teachers of how they view their roles – and it has come to replenish energy at times, as teachers bring a renewed commitment to what they cherish most about the profession and their core purpose.

Kerry Heisler is just such a teacher. She began her Chinook's Edge career in 1998 as music teacher at École H.J. Cody High School in Sylvan Lake, and moved this year to Beacon Hill Elementary.

"I loved being at H.J. Cody, of course, which is why I stayed all these years! It was so rewarding to be part of a strong and accomplished fine arts team. But I began feeling compelled to introduce myself to a new challenge, something that makes me think differently, fresh material to teach. There is so much joy, laughter and hugs in elementary – there is in high school, too, but these young kids just don't let anything hold them back, you know? There is pure joy for singing, moving, feeling the rhythm and not allowing anything to stop you!"



"We are so excited to have her here," said Principal Trevor Sanche. "We've been keen to establish a strong fine arts program and it's unusual for an elementary school to have someone with the experience, passion and enthusiasm she brings. Kids are showing me things they are doing at home because she has got them so excited about music. And all we did was support her vision!"

"I get to focus on sparking the music in the younger child, so they can take those gifts with them in the years to come. I feel like I've had support to make shifts throughout my career in Chinook's Edge and there is always lots of opportunity here. I feel like this division has supported me and taken me wherever I wanted to go," said Kerry. "The sense of community when you're creating music together, the discovery, the joy - it's just something I love."

Kerry also shares the joy of music with two different choirs in Sylvan Lake as volunteer conductor. She is also involved in a community business that provides music outreach and opportunities throughout North America, and has been invited to be a guest conductor for 120 Grade 4-5 students with the All State Choir in January to open the Missouri Music Education Conference.



"I'm learning the pace of younger kids, which is rapid-fire all day and then a clean bookend to the day," said Kerry, with one of her musical props. "BoBo sings to the kids and they sing back – it's a fun but serious teaching tool. I've had to re-learn so many things myself, it's been a fantastic kind of reawakening. I have 10 alarms that go off throughout the day, because I have to allow two minutes for these students to line up so they can move to their next class. It's so fun!"



"She's a big celebrity here," said Samantha Dyck, a substitute teacher for Chinook's Edge in Sylvan Lake. "Kerry taught me at H.J. Cody and now my kids are in her class at Beacon Hill. I was thrilled to find out she's their teacher, because she will share her music skills with them but she will also help them love learning."

**World Teachers' Day is recognized each October 5 to draw attention to the vital contribution teachers make each day.**