



STRAWBERRY PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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To Flynn Ryan Hawks Adventure Scholarship Grant:

I have had the privilege of working with Desiree Wilcox for the past 5 years at Strawberry Park Elementary. While many educators are skilled at what they do, few possess the natural talent that Desiree demonstrates every day. She has a gift for connecting with special needs children, supporting them in reaching their potential, while also serving as an advocate for their families.

Students are drawn to Desiree's kind and gentle presence. They can feel how much she cares about them, and as a result, students work hard for her. At the same time, she holds a high expectation for her students, sincerely believing in them and seeing their true potential, especially when it may be overlooked by fellow educators. I have witnessed students blossom and thrive much as a result of Desiree's thoughtful instruction and manner of interaction.

Desiree is driven to assure that her students' needs are met. As a special education teacher, she worked closely with classroom teachers, helping them set up individualized supports essential for students to meet their IEP goals. She can look at a classroom environment, and identify areas that could change or be adapted to best support students in accessing education. Desiree has a great depth of knowledge and is an invaluable resource for teachers, sharing her expertise and providing guidance to colleagues when they need it the most. She leads with her heart while fiercely advocating for students and their families.

Desiree's ability to make authentic connections does not end with students and is highly evident in her work with parents. Families are seen as partners in student learning, as Desiree listens to them intently to better understand the child. Further, she is quick to take action using parent input and her expertise. Parents of children with special needs can often feel isolated or alone, and Desiree is that voice of reassurance and guidance that parents often need. Many families view Desiree as an advocate, mentor, and cheerleader not only for their child but for them as well.

I can honestly say that Desiree is one of the most talented, professional, and thoughtful teachers I have worked with in my 17 years of teaching. She is a go-getter and takes every opportunity to further herself as an educator for the benefit of her students, their families, and the school community. Desiree Wilcox is an educator who changes lives.

Sincerely,

Kelly Adamich-Gasau
Biliteracy Specialist