

Mrs. toni hvizdayk – educator of the year

Business



In 7th and 8th grade at Louis L. Redding Middle School I was lucky enough to be taught by Mrs.

Toni Hvizdayk, the school's first and only Sign Language teacher. Mrs. Hvizdayk is that one teacher that you will never forget; even when your hair goes salt-and-pepper, you still will remember her lessons, personality and name. I looked forward to her class everyday, and I felt most comfortable at school for the 45 minutes or so my classmates and I spent stuffed in the ever hot and windowless classroom of her's that was once a school storage room/closet. Had I been learning from a teacher that was less than amazing, those 45 minutes in the closet-turned-classroom would've been h-e-double hockey sticks.

Mrs. V (Mrs. Hvizdayk) gave me a new hobby and something to look forward to at school, and I can't thank her enough. It wasn't just me. Everyone in class adored her, even the known rebels and frequent ISS flyers of Redding Middle seemed to sit straighter in her class and work a bit harder. Mrs.

V has this motherly vibe and overall warmth. She greeted everyone with a smile and hello when they walked into her classroom. She payed attention to all of us and never taught at us all day then went home. She engaged everyone-even the shy kids, and made she sure we understood what we were learning; she was less formal than other teachers-asking us about our plans for the weekend and telling us hers or joking around. Mrs. V was always sure to be on the same page as us and accommodating.

For example she kept a fan in her classroom and would ask us if it was blowing in our face, or if it was too cold, and she did whatever she could to

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make everyone comfy. In 8th grade I got a concussion, and sure all the teachers were helping me catch up, but Mrs. V would specifically ask me how I was feeling. I think she even asked me once if the light was too bright as if she could have fixed it! It felt nice having a teacher that you knew cared about you; she made everyone feel like they could come to her for help with schoolwork or whatever. Mrs.

Hvizdayk has a passion for sign language, and you can tell she absolutely loves teaching it to kids. She even is in the process of teaching it to her toddler! There were one or two deaf concerts in the area she went to, and our class was all on board to go as a field trip except that wouldn't have flown with the principal given the fact that the concert was on a Friday night in a club or something in the city. But anyways you could see sign language was her passion, and she would go to all kinds of events in the deaf community in her freetime. Her goal was basically to give us knowledge of deaf culture and teach us a great language that she hoped we would keep up with after we walked out of Redding. In those 2 years I became almost fluent in a second language. That's pretty amazing considering I've taken 5 languages so far and have only been successful in 1/5.

She's better at teaching than any other educator I've had. That says a lot given the fact that I took english from my state's (state!!!!!!) teacher of the year 2011. Mrs. V was able to bring her students interests to the classroom. We would sign popular songs in class while we were listening to them; she'd also keep us engaged with creative lessons using skits, webcams, and even ear plugs! She thought of the brilliant idea for us to walk in a deaf person's

shoes for a day by wearing noise-blocking earplugs and headphones in all our classes, then write about our experience.

We all looked ridiculous, but her lesson was absolutely genius. She was greatly experienced and qualified too; before becoming a teacher she was an interpreter for the government! Being in the deaf community so much, she was familiar with not only the language but Deaf culture, and because of that we learned so much more than just how to sign. She is absolutely incredible. I really can't thank Mrs. Hvizdayk enough for all she taught me and for giving me a love for sign language.

She has all the qualities of a "perfect" teacher and more. Heck, sometimes I'd wish she was my mother! She's the Educator of the Century!