

MENTORING MATTERS

A Newsletter for Teacher Mentors

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MENTOR SPOTLIGHT EMILY STORY

Emily, who has benefitted immensely from talented mentors herself, is grateful for the opportunity to have a similar impact on beginning teachers.

Her own simple acts of kindness include learning about the things her mentees like and bringing them periodic gifts when they are having a difficult day. She has seen that even memes, jokes, and humor can help teachers who feel burdened. She also finds value in sharing her own "teaching fails" with mentees so that they can have more patience with themselves.

Emily remembers a particularly poignant mentoring moment when a mentee took advice she had given about coordinating stations for math instruction and made adaptations of his own to fit his style. She felt honored to have her advice resonate with the mentee while also seeing the mentee's manifest a sense of empowerment.



Emily teaches middle school science at North Star Academy in Bluffdale

<https://emedia.uen.org/hubs/mentor>



Serena teaches physical education in Grades K-6 at Noah Webster Academy in Orem.

MENTOR SPOTLIGHT SERENA IVIE

Serena earned the teacher mentor endorsement last year and enjoys getting to know and build relationships with the teachers she mentors.

Celebrating the little and big things with mentees is important to Serena. Recognizing the wins "helps teachers know you care and are interested in what they are doing." Even remembering a mentee's birthday or other special days and events in their life can be a great way to demonstrate simple acts of kindness.

Serena remembers having had a particularly bad day as a new teacher and reflects that her mentor was able to assist her in seeing the good things she was doing so that she didn't dwell on a few tough aspects of a single day.

The kind words of a mentor really helped her survive her first year as a teacher and she appreciates being able to provide similar support to her mentees.

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Making the Difference

Chase Mielke tells the following story of giving his psychology class the assignment to make a stranger smile and the impression it made on one woman:

"A group of students handed out positive notes to strangers. Index cards with affirmations—handwriting imperfect, grammar and spelling all janky. These teens were on a mission that day to find the most miserable person they could. Seriously. Overachievers on the assignment, they were scanning the downtown Kalamazoo library for the least happy person. That guy? Nah, too smiley. Her? Nope, seems OK. Then they spotted her. A woman who looked miserable—raw and reddened eyes, disheveled clothes, her face frozen in a scowl.

They flipped through all their notes to find the perfect one to give her. They awkwardly

walked up, slid the index card to the woman, scampered away, and watched from a distance. To their horror, the woman started bawling in the library. They panicked, thinking they offended her, and rushed up to apologize. As they started to say sorry, she threw her arms out for a hug.

She cried into the shoulders of my students, total strangers to her. Turns out, she had suffered a miscarriage one month prior. Every day since, she questioned her desire to live. Why should she keep going? Why would life punish her like this? What was the point? But then she told my students that this note—to her—was a sign from God to not give up. The note said four words: 'It will get better.'

Four words on an index card may have saved this human being's life. It was an act so simple, yet so powerful."

"Small acts of kindness can lead to massive changes over time."

As beginning teachers struggle with challenges that at times seem insurmountable, mentors can have similarly powerful impact. By meeting mentees where they are and supporting their incremental growth, you can have a dramatic impact on the life and instructional practices of those you mentor. You may never know the internal struggles facing your mentees and even small acts of kindness can lead to massive changes over time.

How can you make your mentees smile today?

Find additional newsletters for mentors and for beginning teachers at

<https://schools.utah.gov/curr/educatordevelopment/teachermentors?mid=5736&tid=4>