

Chicken Soup for *Friendswood ISD*

Working with, teaching, and loving my QUEST students at Friendswood High School is (let's be honest) exhausting. So much of what we do in Special Education is individualized. A weekly lesson plan for a typical high school class might look like a to-do list. A weekly lesson plan for QUEST looks more like a spider web.

As a teacher in special education, I rely on many “assistants” from the FISD support services staff to paraprofessionals, and sometimes even the teachers across the hall. But this year, my QUEST students have welcomed a brand new kind of assistant.

Early in October, I was approached by the FHS Ready, Set, Teach teacher on campus. One of her teachers in training needed a temporary classroom for a couple of weeks while the logistics of working with another teacher in the District came together. I wasn't really sure just what a student-teacher would be able to do for me or my students but I figured the more the merrier - bring on an extra set of hands for those two periods each morning.

Every day, Miss Nicole found something to keep her busy whether it was laminating or cutting or reading to the class or, eventually, working one-on-one with students, she quickly became a constant. She has her own class and does not “work” on Mondays -- and on those days, my students began asking, “Where is Miss Nicole?” I began to dread the day she would leave us.

Then, out of the blue in true Friendswood style, Miss Nicole asked a special question, “What if I wanted to stay in your classroom for the rest of the year?” Little did I know, she had already asked her Ready, Set Teach Teacher the same question. She explained that she was learning so much and had really grown to enjoy working with my QUEST students. I had worried that she would be bored but she had become a spider working on her very own web. Curiosity and an eagerness to learn makes all the difference.

Some days I wonder what experiences she might have had with her “original” assignment, but I feel blessed that she chose us. Miss Nicole adds so much to our mornings. Her laughter and smile light up our room. What a gift we've been given this 2020.

-Vera McKee, FHS Quest Teacher