

Chicken Soup

for

Friendswood ISD

When I first interviewed for a position at Cline, I was teaching my first year of second grade in a nearby school district. In the interview I mentioned that I would like to stay in second grade, or possibly teach third grade. Mitzi McEwen called and said that I got the job (YAY!)...but it would be for a Kindergarten position.

I knew I wanted to be in Friendswood, so I accepted the role thinking maybe it would only be for one year and then I can move up to a higher grade level. Well, 15 years later here I am still in Kindergarten! I never imagined I would love these littles as much as I do. It wasn't easy, but once I realized how you have to model EVERYTHING, I slowly started to get the hang of it. I became so impressed with what these kinders could do and learn in a matter of 9 months. They grow so much and there is nothing better than seeing that smile on their faces when they start to read on their own. It has become so important to me to make sure their first year of "big school" is fun, so they will love learning, but also have a place that makes them feel confident in themselves. To see them not wanting to let go of their mom on the first day to confidently and happily walking into my room excited about school is one of the best feelings.

The relationships I have built with so many wonderful kids (and parents) is such a blessing to me. There is nothing better than running into one of my old students, all grown up, years later and they still remember me. I've learned why being a Kindergarten teacher is so important. Aside from all the academics, we have the opportunity to instill a love of learning, build confidence, and to make school a joyful place. Throughout the year, when all the demands can become overwhelming, I step back and remind myself of what is important. Making all students feel loved, confident, and setting the stage for a lifelong love of learning is the best chicken soup for my soul.

-Melissa Hanks, Cline Elementary Teacher