

# Chicken Soup

for

## Friendswood ISD

My name is Joel Estrada and I have been teaching Spanish for 24 years, 21 at FHS.

My favorite memory as a teacher was when one of my most difficult male students came back several years after graduating from FHS and told me that he was so sorry for being so rude and disrespectful in my Spanish class. He said that he greatly appreciated me for my patience while dealing with his misbehavior. He also mentioned that he was using his Spanish at his present job and was grateful for the time and effort I put into teaching him. To be honest, this came as a surprise and I always thought he wasn't learning anything in my class. I learned that day that whatever the situation, just plant the seed of education in our young people and they might surprise you in what they learn.

The first time I was really challenged as a teacher was the first day of my teaching career. I grew up in a Spanish-speaking home, but I learned quickly that speaking it and teaching it were two different things. What I learned from this experience is that I shouldn't be afraid to ask questions, ask my fellow Spanish teachers for advice and sometimes steal some of their great ideas. I even learned that when you don't know the answer to a question, it's ok to admit it. I learned from my mistakes and it made me stronger as an educator.

My father passed away on December 29, 2021, and one of my students gave me a card during this difficult time. It said, "A Father's love is always with his children. Hoping that memories will ease your sadness and that the strength and love your father gave will surround you now, bringing you the blessing of peace." This impacted my heart in a powerful way. I normally ask my students how they are doing and give them some encouraging words, but I was so blessed to have received these kind words from one of my students. That made my day!

It has been a great blessing working at FHS and I hope God will give me several more years to enjoy being around some of the greatest students, teachers & administrators we have on this Earth.

-Joel Estrada, FHS Spanish Teacher