

Ruthie LEWIS



QUICK FACTS

Hometown: Helena, Arkansas

Years as Educator: 40+

Current Role: 6th Grade Language Arts at Wilson Middle School

Other Notable Subjects Taught: Social Studies

Most Challenging Part of Job: Keeping kiddos focused and getting them to come to school on a daily basis

Most Memorable Career Moment: Putting together a scrapbook with a student—and coming back years later to read it together (in tears, no less)



Minus one year in Ogden, Utah, Ruthie Lewis has taught at Wilson Middle School for her entire educational career—now for over 40 years.

“I think I’ve been extremely lucky over the years to work with some of the greatest people on Earth,” she says. “And that’s kept me interested and wanting to be at school. And the kids have been great.”

Although technology has certainly changed how things are done in the classroom, Lewis notes that an educator’s work is never finished—and the process is ongoing and never-ending. “No matter which year it is, there’s always something that you have to adjust yourself to,” she says. “Not just with the kids, but with new teaching methods, new strategies. So I’m improving every day, and of course, the kids help me. I learn from them as (much) as they’re hopefully learning from me.”

In fact, Lewis recognizes just how crucial it is for teachers to be flexible when it comes to teaching materials—because what’s provided one year might change depending on what the district says.

Either way, she’s found her sweet spot at Wilson, and she especially enjoys working with 6th graders. “I’ve taught 6th, 7th, and 8th graders, and I love the 6th graders because you can see the progress, the maturity,” she says.

When she isn’t in the classroom, Lewis loves to read (a lot) and do crossword puzzles—with the occasional window-shopping spree and gardening (although she’s still waiting for her green thumb to sprout).

Chuck BUXBAUM



QUICK FACTS

Hometown: New York City, New York

Years as Educator: 28

Current Role: College Guidance Counselor at Sandia Prep

Other Notable Roles: Middle and High School Science Teacher; Chair of Sustainability Committee. Developed and tends to the Sandia Prep Garden.

Most Challenging Part of Job: Helping students

understand that there are no bad questions **Memorable Moment:** Taking his 2007 class to testify at a public hearing about the Clean Cars Act, including research, debate, and preparing their opinions. He later received a letter from the chair of the Air Quality Board acknowledging the power of their participation.



Chuck Buxbaum might have had the world’s shortest retirement. Soon after he announced his retirement from Sandia Prep, a position in the college guidance office opened up, and the high school science teacher jumped at the opportunity. “I love the idea of helping students with that exploration of what’s next,” he says.

This passion for guiding students through the transition from high school to college was sparked during his year teaching in Vietnam. He and his wife, who is also a teacher, served as college guidance counselors to the 18 American juniors and seniors studying abroad. When he returned, he knew he wanted to make the same impact on his Sandia Prep community. “As a college counselor, I feel like I’m helping package the final product of our process,” he says.

Buxbaum held a different part of that process for 28 years. Passionate about environmental issues, he wasn’t afraid to change his lesson plan and adapt to current events. Over the years, his students have testified in public hearings and conducted countless experiments in the Sandia Prep Garden, which Buxbaum oversees.

Whether students are early in their high school career or are about to walk the stage at graduation, Buxbaum aims to leave them with a sense of wonder about the world around them. “I want to show my students that science must play a role in how our society functions, if we are to make wise and sustainable decisions.”