



MEDIA RELEASE

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Building strong relationships is key to teacher's success -a celebration of World Teachers' Day-

For Immediate Release, October 5, 2016: Kaitlyn Schnell's strategy for guiding her students towards top results on their Diploma Exams is a simple one – get to know them well.

Kaitlyn teaches English, along with Drama and Photography, to students from Grades 9-12 at Olds Koinonia Christian School. When Central Office staff reviewed the latest division results on Diploma Exams, it became obvious that her students achieved at extremely high levels right across the board.

“Certainly government tests are only one factor in determining student success, but in this case we could see that the English results at Olds Koinonia were pretty much off the charts and we wanted to see why,” said Superintendent Kurt Sacher. “Our focus in Chinook's Edge is that teachers and staff at all grade levels are invested in the eventual outcome that each student will graduate from high school with the confidence and skills to pursue post-secondary opportunities. Kaitlyn is entirely committed to investing the hard work and time into making sure her students have every opportunity to reach these high levels of success.”

Being part of a Kindergarten to Grade 12 school allows everyone in the school community to truly know one another well, and Kaitlyn's students are well prepared to work hard year after year. They are encouraged to bring their individual creativity to English class, but there is no question that they will also be approaching each component with a sharp sense of practicality. Throughout the year they participate in after school prep, where each student builds a comprehensive review guide. In the weeks before the exam, Kaitlyn holds an hour-long interview with each student individually to work through a sample Diploma Exam booklet together, analyze the assignments, look for themes, discuss the work and develop a thesis together.

“We basically hit the ground running and start talking about the Diploma Exam on day one,” said Kaitlyn. “In our school, I see these students in English for three years and I start the diploma prep in Grade 10, in terms of looking at the end result of where I'm trying to get all of them. If they are equipped to excel at the Diploma Exam, that means they have high literacy skills that will help them succeed at whatever they choose to do.

“English also is about what each student brings to the subject, and forming a close relationship with them helps to draw each of them out. These kids mean a lot to me and I knew when I started teaching here four years ago that Chinook's Edge shares the same philosophy that I do – that strong relationships is what matters. The culture of caring relationships runs from division office right through to the classroom, and it impacts our students. Seeing them succeed, watching them become young adults, and knowing I have helped them grow in their knowledge and their spirituality makes me so happy. We are a Christian school, so I am able to say that first and foremost in my success is God. He has given me all these tools and I know I'm in the right place.”

World Teachers' Day is held each October 5 to draw attention to the vital contribution teachers make each day.

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