

NEiTA 2009 ASG Inspirational Teaching Awards

State and Territory Award Recipient



Toni Waters

Diploma of Teaching (Primary), Graduate Diploma of Education (Early Childhood), Graduate Diploma of Arts (Religious Education), Master of Religious Education

St Francis College, Crestmead, Queensland

Nominated by: Parents' and Friends' Association, Student Council, school parents

Position: Head of Primary • Category: Primary • Level taught: Prep-Year 7 • Years teaching: 19 years • Years at this school/centre: 11 years • School type: Catholic • Town/Suburb: Crestmead • State: Queensland • Postcode: 4132

Why teaching?

My dream was always to be a teacher! As a student, I found it difficult to conform to the traditional models of schooling. I dreamt that one day I would be a teacher who would respond to the needs of all learners and their interests.

What I love most about teaching is that I get to meet so many different people. Throughout my teaching career, I have formed lifelong relationships with others, assisted, guided and nurtured others and also learnt many new things from others. 'To teach ... is to touch a life forever'. I believe that it is the 'little things' that teachers do that make a difference in our world. That is why I love to teach and why I continue turning up each day!

Promoting harmony and celebrating diversity

With 52 different nationalities and cultures represented at St Francis College, the school could easily be a place of division. However, as Head of Primary, Toni Waters creates a harmonious and cooperative learning environment. She promotes peace, justice, harmony and respect.

To celebrate her students' diversity, Toni has introduced many special events into the school calendar such as Harmony Day, Peace Day, National Aboriginal and Islander Day and many sporting days. All these events are extremely popular and help to promote a sense of shared community at St Francis College.

Toni runs the Signature Strengths Program at her school. She believes that every child has at least one special strength. The Signature Strengths Program works to develop that strength and thereby promote a feeling of accomplishment for the student. Toni's aim is to develop the whole child, physically, emotionally, cognitively and spiritually. As a result of the Signature Strengths Program the college was awarded the state prize at the Wakakirri National Story Festival, the largest multi-arts event for primary schools in Australia.

Toni also uses the Rock and Water Program in her teaching methods. This program links physical exercises with mental and social skills. Another method, The Blue Earth Program is used to enhance the self-esteem and general health of students through movement and physical activities.

In 2009, enrolments have increased from 336 to 387, a significant change for the school and a tribute to Toni's leadership. With nearly two decades of teaching experience, Toni knows how to create the best learning environments and opportunities for her students. She is a role model to her pupils and her peers, treating everyone with dignity, respect, care and consideration.

Contact details:

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