

ELEMENTARY SCIENCE TEACHER USES TOYS, SCALES TO CAPTURE IMAGINATIONS ; LAURA AMMERMAN, Palm Beach Post Staff Writer; ; The Palm Beach Post ; 08-08-2007 ;

ELEMENTARY SCIENCE TEACHER USES TOYS, SCALES TO CAPTURE IMAGINATIONS

BYLINE: LAURA AMMERMAN, Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

EDITION: FINAL

SECTION: NEIGHBORHOOD POST

TYPE: BIOGRAPHY

MEMO: Boynton Beach: MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR: Claire Greene, 61

Claire Greene has been teaching for more than 30 years. The 61-year-old suburban Boca Raton resident has spent the past 13 years working at Poinciana Elementary School, a magnet school in Boynton Beach.

She is the school's science resource teacher, instructing every class at the school on a rotating basis.

"I teach every student in the school, 600 and some-odd students. They all come through my door on a regular basis," Greene said. "Every teacher teaches science in my school. (Students) come to me for extra-special things - bigger experiments that take more time out of your day."

She holds a master's degree in education with a specialization in reading, but science is her main focus and passion.

Greene got hooked on science in New York City, where she taught for 20 years. She remembers a specific lesson that demonstrated the subject's potential to capture children's interest: making an incubator out of a Styrofoam ice chest for a study on embryology.

"I think I was hooked at that point," she said. "I just loved the results and the way the children got into it."

Greene said she began volunteering to attend and teach workshops on science and eventually earned a federal grant to instruct teachers from other schools how "to do small-group, hands-on science."

She also attended training programs at a museum in New York and the aquarium at Coney Island in the city's Brooklyn borough.

"I developed a very good background on the sciences," she said.

Throughout the years, Greene has continued to earn grants and awards for her teaching.

"The award that I got this year was the Gustav Ohaus (Award) for Innovations in Science Teaching," Greene said.

Ohaus, the company that gave her the award, manufactures scales, such as the "pan balance" and "triple beam balance" scales Poinciana Elementary students use to help them learn estimation, record keeping and more.

"I used that in many different ways in my lessons, showing students that they need to have standardized units for measuring and then how to measure," she said.

Because of her award, the school received \$1,000 worth of scales, which Greene said she selected.

The company paid for her to attend the National Science Teachers Association conference in St. Louis, took her to dinner and gave her a plaque to display at the school and a trophy. It also awarded Greene \$1,500 for personal use.

"Teachers don't usually get that kind of stuff," she said excitedly of the money.

Greene said she will be writing science curricula for the company, which will teach older students how to teach the younger students to use scales.

She also likes to use building toys such as Legos and K'nex, to teach students abstract ideas.

"The kids get a kick out of that because they're using hands-on and they're manipulating," she said. "The boys especially" like those activities.

Despite her focus on science, Greene hasn't abandoned her roots in reading education. She strives to make reading, phonics and vocabulary tips part of every science lesson.

"Children always learn reading when they're with me," she said.

- laura_ammerman@pbpost.com

ILLUSTRATIONS/PHOTOS: PHOTO (C)

ELIZA GUTIERREZ/Staff Photographer

Poinciana Elementary got \$1,000 worth of new scales, thanks to Claire Greene, who won the Gustav Ohaus Award for Innovations in Science Teaching. The Ohaus company makes scales. Greene uses them to teach. She also likes to use building toys such as Legos to teach kids about science.

KEYWORDS: BB NEIGHBORHOOD WOMAN EDUCATION SCIENCE

Copyright © Palm Beach Newspapers, Inc., 2007

Copyright © 2007 ProQuest-CSA LLC. All rights reserved. Terms and Conditions can be found at <http://www.il.proquest.com/proquest/terms.shtml>