



About Tim Rhoades – FEPPP’s October Teacher Spotlight

Tracy Godat, FEPPP Executive Director, sat down with Tim Rhoades, a fifth-grade teacher at Crystal Springs Elementary in Bothell, WA since 1985, and asked him to share some of his teaching experiences.

TG: Why did you get into teaching:

TR: Because I didn’t want to sit at a job where I wasn’t active. I was in scouting for 19 years including getting my eagle scout. I discovered my love for leading other people. This helped influence my decision on a career path. I love hands on learning and am service oriented. I wanted to make learning engaging and fun.

TG: Why elementary?

TR: I picked elementary because I like the idea of being a jack of all trades and love the idea of integrating cross curriculum with the same kids all day rather than middle and high school where you have multiple classes of students.

TG: I know you run your class as a classroom economy.

TR: I love the idea of integrating money and personal responsibility and have been doing this for over 30 years. I show them all the ways they can make money, i.e., classroom jobs, recycling, starting a business. It is a management system that has become a classroom culture.

TG: How do the students respond at the beginning of the year?

TR: From day one they are charged for using the bathroom and getting water. I show them my own utility bills, so they start understanding there is a cost to everything. They understand really fast that using the bathroom at lunch or recess is free. I introduce credit scores each week based on turning in assignments on time.

TG: What is the most challenging about teaching now?

TR: There are so many distractions away from the classroom. Students aren’t in a learning shape at this point and haven’t had the structure of being in the classroom. We are still socializing students in a school setting. Students today spend so much time on social media and video games rather than outside being kids.

TG: Final thoughts.

TR: For my fellow teachers, hold on to your ideals, values and stick with it – we are making a difference even though it may not feel like it. We all need to continue to follow our passion!