

Teuton Focus

New teachers enthusiastic about starting the school year

Inman USD 448 students are back in school, and it's promising to be great start to a new year. Helping to make the 2011-12 school year memorable are four new teachers who have joined returning staff. Following is a brief introduction to the latest additions to the USD 448 teaching staff.

AARON DIBBENS

Aaron Dibbens will be working in the resource room at Inman High School providing academic support in a variety of ways to high school students. He comes to Inman from Halstead High School where he worked as a paraprofessional. A McPherson native, he is a Bethel College graduate and received his special education training through the ACCK in McPherson. He recently completed additional training in quantum learning techniques through the McPherson County Special Education Cooperative and is looking forward to putting what he learned into practice with his students.



Aaron Dibbens

"I'm excited about putting faces to names and developing relationships (with my students). Being the new guy in the building, allows me to start with a clean slate. I'm excited about bringing what I've learned into the classroom," Mr. Dibbens said when asked what he was looking forward to as the new year begins.

His teaching goals for the year include enabling his students to do their best in their classes and to accurately monitor their progress so he and his students can see their success along the way.

"(I became involved in Special Education) because it provides an opportunity to have a strong impact in the life of a student who may have had a difficult time and to see them succeed. That's what drives me," he said.

When asked to name a book that was a favorite read, or had made an impact on him in the past year, Mr. Dibbens was quick to say *Season of Life* by Jeffrey Marks. In the book, Marks recounts his experience as a towel boy with the Indianapolis Colts and how it defined for him the meaning of what it is to be a man.

"I took away from that book that all students have the capacity to be loved and show love. Through the right kind of teaching, we can work through that wall teenagers (often put up) and help them show their true selves. We can help them learn that they are not defined by what they have, but who they are,"

Mr. Dibbens said.

Mr. Dibbens and his wife, Jamie, who teaches and coaches in the Newton school system, live in Newton along with their five-year-old dog.

JODI CASE

Introducing preschool students to their first classroom experience will be Jodi Case. Mrs. Case is not new to Inman, but will be taking on a new role as a classroom teacher this year. She brings with her a strong background in early education, most recently training teachers and doing professional development/facilitation for ESSDACK, the educational training consortium to which Inman USD 448 belongs. As part of that work, she established a professional learning community (PLC) for area preschool teachers which meets one day a month. She will continue to be involved with that group. She is looking forward to returning to her roots in the classroom and day-to-day interaction with young learners.



Jodi Case

Before working at ESSDACK, Mrs. Case established the preschool program for four-to-five-year-olds in the Buhler school district. Her first teaching job was in kindergarten at Meriden, Kan., followed by stints as a librarian/media specialist at Stafford and Lindsborg. A Belleville, Kan., native, Mrs. Case graduated with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and holds a master's degree in library science, both from Fort Hays State University.

"I'm looking forward to being back in the classroom," she said. "There is something about kids that gives me a sense of fulfillment. We're in a service-oriented profession. It's awesome to see where the students start and where they end up. I needed that spark back that working with students gives me."

She intends to maintain what former preschool teacher Roxie Sneath (who is moving to the first grade) established with the program while adding some new things. Her goal is to prepare her students to walk in the kindergarten doors ready, both socially and cognitively, to be successful. Another goal is to involve families in their children's education.

"It is so important," she said.

Her background in early education and library has fostered a passion for literacy in Mrs. Case, who believes that literacy connects to all areas of learning. She says it is important to model how important literacy is to children.

It's not surprising that when asked one of her favorite books read in the last year, Mrs. Case chose a children's book, *Pete the Cat, Rocking in My School Shoes* by Eric Litwin and his earlier book, *Pete the Cat, I Love My New White Shoes*. The rhythm of the books is engaging for young children and, she said, they can make an instant connection with the themes of resiliency presented by the stories.

Mrs. Case is looking forward to becoming more connected into the community where she has lived for the past 12 years, as her work experience has taken her out of town since moving to Inman. She commented that she is "totally looking forward" to developing community connections beyond her own children's friends and their parents.

Mrs. Case loves spending time with her family – husband, Kevin, and children, Bryce, Savannah and Keaton – reading, traveling and going to the movies.

JANN GLIDEWELL

Inman High School students wanting to learn a second language will get that knowledge from Spanish teacher Jann Glidewell.

Mrs. Glidewell brings a number of years of experience to her new position as she has taught both high school and college level Spanish and has taught seventh grade and high school English. Most recently, she was the librarian at McPherson Middle School. She has a bachelor's degree in Spanish and library science from Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Okla., and a master's degree in secondary curriculum, also from Northwestern Oklahoma State University.

After a number of years in the school library, Mrs. Glidewell is looking forward to being in the classroom.

"I wanted to get back to that one-on-one with students on a daily basis," She said in explaining her decision to return to the classroom. "In the library, you might help a student pick out a book and not see him or her for another week."

Born in Corpus Christi, Texas, Mrs. Glidewell was raised in Oklahoma, lived several years in Puerto Rico and has lived in McPherson for the past 23 years. Those years in Puerto Rico provided her a wonderful opportunity to learn Spanish from native Spanish speakers in a real-world context. Mrs. Glidewell sees her role as a teacher to be more than just teaching the mechanics of Spanish language skills. One of her goals is to share with her students the Spanish culture beyond grammar and the important role Spanish culture plays in today's world.

"When I took Spanish in college, I just hated the way it was taught – nothing but grammar," Mrs. Glidewell said. "I intend to incorporate a lot of cultural things. It will be more than just grammar and mechanics."

Mrs. Glidewell has found her Spanish language skills to have a very practical application outside of the classroom as she has been called on to interpret for students whose first language is Spanish. Her translation skills have also been used by the McPherson courts and at the hospital.

As a librarian, Mrs. Glidewell has read hundreds of books to choose new acquisitions, but in the past year, two have stuck out for her. The first is *Heaven Is Real* by Todd Burpo because it made her



Jann Glidewell

smile knowing that what we have hoped for in heaven can be anticipated. The second book is *The Hunger Games*, which surprised her because she liked it.

"I don't normally like science fiction, but the book really held my interest and has been well received by students. Reading a new genre really broadened my horizons," Mrs. Glidewell said.

Outside of the classroom, Mrs. Glidewell enjoys traveling, reading, gardening and being with her family. She and her husband, Danny, live in McPherson and have two grown children, Danny and Kaley. They also have two grandchildren, Jacob and Isabella, with whom she enjoys spending time.

"I am very excited to begin my teaching adventure in Inman," Mrs. Glidewell said.

KAYLA STUBBY

Returning to Inman High School in a new role is Kayla Stubby. Ms. Stubby, an IHS graduate who was active in a variety of activities, will now be working with students in the English as a Second Language program. She is also the freshman volleyball coach and will continue as assistant softball coach. Her return to the building as a faculty member as been an interesting change in perspective, she said.



Kayla Stubby

"(Being a faculty member) is extremely different," Ms. Stubby said. "I'm looking at things from the teachers' side now, which is a lot different than when I was a student."

Ms. Stubby holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Sterling College. A December 2010 graduate, she worked as a substitute teacher and assistant softball coach in the Inman district last spring and spent some time assisting a teacher in the Hutchinson school system.

ESL is a new area of instruction for Ms. Stubby, who is enjoying the challenge as she uses her teaching experience to connect and help facilitate learning in the ESL classroom.

"My goal is to discover the potential of my students and help them see and realize their potential to learn," Ms. Stubby said.

That goal translates to any level of teaching, she believes, and is why she entered the profession.

"I want to ignite the spark of curiosity for learning in students," Ms. Stubby said. "I want the kids to have the desire to learn."

She believes the things she does on the softball field or volleyball court also mesh well with what she is trying to do in the classroom -- in both cases she is helping students learn new skills and create an excitement for the activity -- whether it's working a math problem or hitting a ball.

Ms. Stubby said the book that has meant the most to her over the past year was one that was loaned to her by her cooperating teacher at IES. She couldn't remember the exact name -- something about the essentials of teaching -- but she did remember the message and has tried to apply it to her day-to-day teaching.

"The book opened my mind to lots of things, but one of the most important was that teachers need to be patient. Things in the classroom don't always go as we plan. We need to be willing to adapt to circumstances and do the best we can," she said.

Ms. Stubby is living in Inman.