

Christina Smith

Trailside Point Elementary School

2016 Rodel Exemplary Teacher Finalist

Engaging students

“ I love learning and my love for learning is contagious within my classroom and with my students. I use a variety of kinesthetic learning, cooperative learning groups, and activities in my classroom in order keep students engaged in the lesson and keep interest high. Students know when they walk through my door that they play a crucial role in meeting the lesson objective. In my classroom, we are all teachers and we are all students.

A tip for parents

“ I always tell parents to learn with their child. Oftentimes I hear parents say they do not understand what their child is being taught and they do not know how to help them. I always tell these parents that it is okay to not understand and they can take that time as an opportunity to sit with their child and learn together. Let education be part of your relationship with your child.

Learning from a mentor

“ One of the greatest lessons that my mentor taught me was to stand on the shoulders of giants and not be afraid to fall. I was told to humble myself and focus on what great educators before me have done in order to gain student success. Then take those ideas and make them my own, fitting them to meet the needs of my students. I was taught to take those risks in my classroom and consistently try new techniques, learning from each new experience. When my students see me taking those risks, they know it's okay to take them too. In my classroom, failure is part of our success.



Christina Smith
Trailside Point Elementary School

Laveen Elementary District

K-6 SPED Resource

Experience: Nine years in education including six years as a Kindergarten through sixth-grade Special Education Resource teacher, one year as a third-grade general education teacher, and two years as an instructional associate in a self-contained special education classroom; currently serving as the Child Study Team coordinator, Teachers Assistance Team member and Special Education team lead and mentor; previously served as district AIMSweb trainer, and on the math curriculum adoption and district performance pay committees

Degrees: B.A. in Special Education from Arizona State University; Elementary Education Endorsement; SEI Endorsement; Currently pursuing an M.A. in Educational Administration at Grand Canyon University

The Rodel Exemplary Teacher Initiative honors extraordinary teachers and asks that they each mentor high-potential student teachers.

What sets the program apart from typical student teaching programs is that mentor teachers are selected based on their outstanding student achievement in high-need schools, their ability to mentor new teachers, and the recommendation of their principals and Rodel's observation team. This ensures that student teachers are learning from the best. In addition, Rodel provides further training and support to both mentors and student teachers to assure Promising Student Teacher Graduates start their careers as outstanding educators.

Since 2004, 167 Rodel Exemplary Teachers have been named and more than 650 Rodel Promising Student Teachers have been mentored.

The 2016 Rodel Exemplary Teachers will be announced on November 29 at www.rodelaz.org.