

My Most Influential Teacher

By: Jared Walker

In my last twelve years of school I've learned more than I could have ever imagined. But what I learned went beyond just numbers and words, I learned how to work with people. The teacher that taught me the most about learning outside the classroom was Mrs. Heather Rembold. She took us out of the classroom and into the real world. Going to school at St. Peter's, a small Catholic school, I was in a fairly sheltered environment for my middle school years. I don't regret it at all because working with the same people everyday does not allow you to escape problems or conflicts. In a group where not everyone knows each other, it's easier to fall into the shadows and avoid people and things. St. Peter's taught me that I can not escape those things and it's better to take on your problems head on and learn how to work with people.

This is where I really believed that Mrs. Rembold had the greatest effect. She was more than a teacher - she was a leader and a mediator. In an environment as small as St. Peter's the teacher is not just a person that stands in front of the class everyday, they have to know you. With her just beginning her teaching career during that time both her and her students were open to new ideas and different teaching methods. One method that she used with our science curriculum which I'm sure sets her apart were our kayak trips. She had arranged for us ten kayaking trips, as not only a chance to learn but our chance to go beyond the books. We really learned as students to watch out for each other, to trust each other and there was a definite bond that came from that.

Our adventures took us further than the Beaufort River however. As part of our social studies curriculum we took weeklong trips to Williamsburg and Washington DC in seventh and eighth grades respectively. It takes more than just a special teacher it takes a special person to take on all the responsibility of not only planning these trips but taking responsibility for that many kids in a big city far from home. On these trips I learned things that pictures and words in a textbook could never have taught me. I saw the places, I went in the buildings where history really happened.

The reason that I credit her with success as a teacher, leader and mediator is because she knew us as more than students she knew us as people. She took interest in our interests and really wanted to see us succeed in all that we do. She seemed to be an impartial judge when we had a problem and the first to congratulate us with our successes both in and out of the classroom. She taught us religion, social studies and science and her knowledge in those three was only superceded by her interest in us and her determination to see us through to success. A teacher is given a great power, especially teachers that strike us in our prime during middle school, they can mold us. We can become either an asset to society or a menace to it, all dependent upon our experiences during this critical period. I went into Beaufort High tentative about the new experience, about meeting all of the new people and new teachers but I knew that I was ready.

Getting an education from St. Peter's you couldn't slip through the cracks, you were accountable, and this is what makes you do the job and do it right. If you know that your actions will not be rewarded either good or bad then you will not give all that you have. But if you know that your work and dedication will not be looked over then you will go and do the best it is you can do. It was through this that I really decided that I wanted to go to a small college and that I wanted to go to The Citadel. I want the personal connection with my peers and teachers and I want to learn more than what I can find simply in a book. At St. Peter's and with Mrs. Rembold I got a complete experience. I learned about a broad spectrum of things. This is how I envision my college years to be as well, learning more than I could find in a classroom but learning about life and learning about people. If nothing else I came away from St. Peter's a changed and more determined person. I look back on my time there with respect for all that Mrs. Rembold was able to instill in me and that I hope to be an asset to society from the things learned not just in the classroom but what I learned about people.