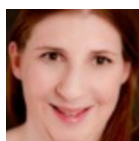


# Meet the Teacher- Young Kim

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Photo by: Young Kim



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After a much needed holiday break, Meet the Teacher is back and ready to welcome in 2012. This weeks teacher is both an accomplished musician and orchestra teacher at Johns Creek High School in Johns Creek. In addition to having taught for 23 years, Mr.Kim has earned both a Bachelors and a Masters degree from Georgia State University. Over the holidays, I had the pleasure of sitting down with him to find out his thoughts on the arts and education.

Becca: So I'll ask the same question of you that I ask all fine arts teachers. What inspired you to teach?

Mr.Kim: Sometimes you don't know what you like until you try different things. My father is a retired Presbyterian minister. While I was in high school, he needed a Sunday school teacher and I came on board. I taught kindergarten that year and found I liked it. One particular incident which got me

interested in the track of teaching was when I told the kindergarten students something we

were going to do the following Sunday. I didn't think it was a big deal, but the kids remembered it and were excited the following week. It occurred to me at that moment that I need to be careful what I say, because kids remember for a long time. Kids are so innocent, and they will absorb what you say and do, and take it with them. From this experience and many others I found that I enjoyed teaching. I have also had a love of music, and had the opportunity to teach an adult to play the piano when I was 10 years old. My background and life experiences have really made it a natural progression toward teaching music. I have always had a love for both music and teaching, and in my Junior year of high school, I decided that this is what I wanted to do.

Becca: Wow, that's quite a story. So what is it that makes your program special?

Mr.Kim: Well, we are a relatively new school and program, but we are already recognized around the state as one of the best orchestras. We were selected to play at the Georgia Music Educators Association conference after only 1 year. One of my big things is that I try to get my kids to learn what hard work is. I want them to be able to contribute to the community in a very positive way. This begins at school. If we can create a sort of utopian society within the school, then kids will feel safe and have a place to be constructive. I want my kids to be like family. Not only do my students learn music in the orchestra room, they hang out all the time, eat, do homework, work on the computers and socialize in the orchestra room. Anything they would need to practice, eat lunch, socialize, or study is available. We also have an Orchestra Holiday party. I want the kids to support each other. I also emphasize integrity and using talent in the right way. To have talent is one thing, but the way that talent is used is what is important. A student can be a brilliant engineer, and could use that talent to be a productive member of society or to be a criminal. Everyone grows at different rate, and has different talents. I try to teach my students to recognize the strengths in each person, to be humble and receptive to new experiences. It's also important to have a good attitude and to always work hard.

Becca: Why do you feel arts education is so important in our schools?

Mr.Kim: It is important for all of us to be well rounded. Arts teaches us to be well rounded. All fine arts disciplines are a community and we work together. Also, the arts teach more than just the basic subjects. Einstein once said "If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of

music...I get most joy in life out of music." Arts education is important because it can give the students a different kind of joy in their lives that is necessary.

Becca: How does a solid fine arts program enhance student performance in core subjects such as reading and math?

Mr.Kim: There are tons of studies that show all the ways in which the arts improve performance. Einstein understood this, as he often carried both his briefcase and his violin. It has also been noted that many top students were music kids. All students should be well rounded, but it is important to understand that quality is more important than quantity. Being involved in fine arts teaches kids to work together as an ensemble and helps build important skills that cannot be learned just through core subjects.

Becca: What advice would you give a student wanting to participate in your discipline?

Mr.Kim: First and foremost, I want you to be in it! I try to stay in touch with feeder schools to increase opportunities for all students. However, not all students may have had the same opportunities in elementary or middle school. I try to work with kids as much as possible because it is not an option to deny a child the opportunity to enjoy the music. It may be the missing link for a kid. It is also important to remember that while it may not seem like a big deal to me, it could be a once in a lifetime chance to that kid.

Becca: Can you share a favorite quote or saying that inspires you?

Mr.Kim: There are so many. I think one that I live by is "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall" (16-Proverbs). It means that one should not be prideful, but humble. I also have a saying that I tell the kids all the time and which I try to live by. They say you should learn from your own mistakes. I say you try to learn from others mistakes so that you don't make a mistake of your own.

As you can see, Mr.Kim enjoys what he does and I can see that his students enjoy having him as a teacher. Check back next week for another Meet the Teacher.

If you would like to nominate a local arts teacher to appear in this column, please contact Becca at [\*\*rmparker13@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:rmparker13@gmail.com).

