

Hamel Elementary Kindergarten Teacher Rachel Graumenz Retains Passion For Helping Students Grow

by Mary Ann Mitchell
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HAMEL - Rachel Graumenz always enjoyed playing school as a child, but her real dream was to become a firefighter like her dad. However, when she got into high school and began attending mission trips and volunteering to be a teen mentor to younger students who struggled academically, her mindset changed.

“I loved the passion I felt helping these students and watching their progress. That is when I decided teaching is what I wanted to do.”

Graumenz is now in her eighth year as a teacher. She has spent seven of those years in District #7, all as a kindergarten teacher, and is currently in her fifth year at Hamel Elementary.

She says the absolute best thing about teaching kindergarten is the excitement the students have for learning.

“The students come to school so happy to be there every day and they are all so full of love. It amazes me each year how much they learn and grow from August to May and I enjoy seeing that progress and excitement every day in the classroom.”

A fun fact about Graumenz is that she spent three years in Anchorage, Alaska, moving there for her husband’s job. She subbed for the first two years and taught second grade the final year they lived there.

“I absolutely loved living in Alaska and felt like every day there was a new adventure.”

Although teaching in Alaska was very similar to teaching in Illinois, there were some major differences.

“Students in Alaska came to school in snowsuits and boots most days and had arrival and dismissal when it was dark outside. As a teacher, I also taught bear and moose safety. This became especially applicable when we had a moose standing outside our window watching our class learn and when we weren’t able to go to the playground because a bear had been recently spotted. It was a unique experience that I am thankful for, but I am also very happy to be home in Illinois and surrounded by family and friends.”

When she’s not in the classroom, Graumenz enjoys spending time with family and does a lot of camping, riding bikes, and playing outside with her boys. She also loves to travel any chance she gets.

