



EDUCATIONAL SPOTLIGHT:

Shannan Norris, shares love of art as teacher at Alton High School

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
September 24 2015 12:09 PM



ALTON - The Alton School District does an excellent job at giving their students numerous opportunities to express themselves. Through athletic, musical and artistic means, the teachers of **Alton High School** are assisting in the goal of creating a quality education for their students.

For **art teacher Shannan Norris**, who has been with the Alton School District for over 13 years, sharing her love for art is a passion.

“The look that a student gets in his or her eye when they start a project is great, or when the inspiration hits them, is priceless,” Norris said, “Proud smiles of a job well done are neat to experience, too.”

Having graduated from **Civic Memorial High School in 1988**, Norris then went on to attend **Monmouth College**, then transferred to **Southern Illinois University Edwardsville**. She graduated in **1993** with a **Bachelor of Science degree in Art and Art Studio**. She spent 22 years teaching outside of the Alton School District.



While in college, Norris found it difficult to pinpoint a career choice right off the bat.

“I started crossing careers off my list,” she said, “When I took my first education class, I was hooked.”

At AHS, Norris teaches **pottery, special education and self-contained autistic art students**. The importance to art education is something Norris is very passionate about.

“This is one of the few areas of education where all the aspects of education merge,” Norris said, “History, math, english and science all converge in one area where creativity can be expressed.”

One of the challenges that comes with being a teacher, Norris explains, is the hours of paperwork that the new teaching evaluation system requires.

“The paperwork takes valuable time away from the teaching experience,” she said, “Completing it all while teaching an overload of classes is pretty hectic.”

The moments Norris has experienced throughout her successful teaching career has made some of the difficulties worth it. Norris explained that quite a few years ago, she had a student who had some behavioral issues. As an incentive, with permission from his parents and the administration, she took him to McDonalds as an incentive for behaving in class. When Norris told him that he could order more than one item of the menu, the student was overwhelmed with emotion and started crying.

“He said his family could only afford for him to only get one item when he could even go to the restaurant,” Norris said, “He then thanked me for believing in him.”