

Julia Eckl Goodrich, Third Grade Teacher
Gordon Elementary School, DDESS North Carolina District, Fort Bragg
DDESS North Carolina 2012 Teacher of the Year

Mrs. Julia Goodrich has 38 years of teaching experience; 22 years of those have been with DoDEA schools. Mrs. Goodrich joined the staff of Gordon Elementary School in the fall of 2008, and in January 2009 she was one of the teachers who helped to open the school. She has taught second and third grade at Gordon Elementary. Prior to this, she was a second-grade teacher at Devers Elementary School, and she also taught first and third grade at Murray Elementary School. Both of these schools are in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. An overseas assignment for 4 years with Upwood Elementary School, RAF Upwood, United Kingdom was Mrs. Goodrich's induction to DoDEA. Before joining DoDEA, Mrs. Goodrich taught first grade with Oakland Elementary School and then Wilson Elementary School with the Lauderdale County Schools in Alabama.

Mrs. Goodrich graduated from Florence State University with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. Afterward, she earned a Master of Arts in Elementary Education from the University of North Alabama. She went on to earn an Education Specialist degree in Elementary Education from the University of North Alabama. She has completed post graduate work with Boston University, Trinity College, and the University of San Diego.

In the classroom and in the school community, Ms. Goodrich stresses the importance of relationships. She believes that these relationships are critical to reaching her students and helping them to get the best education possible. Also, she has high expectations for her students and herself. To ensure her students achieve appropriate and high levels of learning, she continues to build her knowledge of teaching through personal research and collaboration.

Quotes:

My greatest contribution and strongest sense of accomplishment comes every day in the classroom. I know that every day is important. It is my responsibility to help every child believe in himself and reach his highest potential. They must trust that no matter what I will support them. I am constant and unwavering. The life of a child should be carefree and happy, and yet today many of our children are burdened by pressures and distractions of an almost adult nature. One child at a time, one day at a time, my goal is always to enjoy the day, cultivate the sense of family in the classroom and personalize learning. When I watch a child document his growth in his data book or proudly display his work, I know that his accomplishment is my greatest accomplishment. Sometimes it may be grand and public, but more often it is quiet and subtle. To the eye of a stranger it might go unnoticed, but not to a dedicated teacher or a concerned parent or a trained professional eye. Every time a child laughs out loud over a funny story, I laugh too. Every time a child stands before his classmates, I stand with him. Every time a class stands on stage before the school community, I stand with them. I stand in spirit and in pride.

I believe that effective teachers: enjoy teaching, cultivate a sense of family in the classroom, personalize learning, have various approaches to teach each child, have positive attitudes about teaching, have high expectations for themselves and all students, are personable and approachable, use creative techniques, have a sense of humor and emphasize family involvement.

What I have come to realize is that I am a teacher all the time, not just in the classroom. Teaching is not just a job. For me, it is a mission. One thing is clear: I am a powerful difference in making every child's potential a reality. I am a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, and a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child. In "*Goodrichville*" the first thing we learn is to believe in ourselves.

I have always felt an intense responsibility to serve as a positive professional role model. In my classroom, in my school, and across the district, I consistently set high personal and professional standards. What I say, what I do, and how I interact with my community and the public are always reflective of my high standards. To my students, my parents, and my colleagues I communicate this message. "Our work is important. We can do this together. I won't give up on you. This I promise. We are not going to fail."

The era of solo teaching in isolated classrooms is over. Effective teaching and student achievement thrive in strong professional learning communities. I am willing and eager to learn a better way. I have been instrumental in creating supportive grade level learning environments at my current and my previous schools. By nurturing trust, collaboration and communication we know our subjects more deeply, understand more clearly how children learn, use modern technologies more effectively, and create richer learning experiences for students.

With optimism and determination we will move our profession and our students forward. It is our mission one child at a time, one teacher at a time, and one school at a time to bring back excellence. We must all accept our individual responsibilities, and we will move forward collectively. Let us focus on what we have the ability to influence. What we have control of is our relationships with students, parents, and colleagues. Our relationships and skills are the foundation of our learning communities and our future.

We as teachers must raise the bar not just for our students, but for ourselves. Are we modeling what we ask of our students? Are we asking as much of ourselves as we do from our students? Is our message clear in what we say and do? We are becoming more experienced and confident designing authentic lessons based on standards, using multiple assessments and data for differentiated instruction, and managing flexible learning experiences. Are we just as qualified and capable as professional role models?

If we are to bring the highest levels of respect and excellence back to our profession, we must collectively accept that much of professionalism cannot be mandated in standards or written into a contract. We are a highly trained profession with ethics and responsibilities. We must be self-monitoring and reflective as a profession.