

Tom Tschirhart

When Rock Creek Elementary opened its doors in 1992, Tom Tschirhart was one of the teachers who was there to welcome students. In the 27 years since then, he has been a pillar at Rock Creek, coworker Elizabeth Clyatt said.

Tom's "dedication and endless efforts to instill a sense of confidence and an eagerness to learn in his students was admirable. Every day he invested in each and every student in his class, meeting their individual needs," Elizabeth said. "The students loved his sense of humor," she added. "At the end of the year they left his room feeling empowered and with a curiosity about the world. Rock Creek was very lucky to have him as a part of the staff since the school opened. We miss him every day!"

Before becoming an Eagle, Tom worked at Lake Wilderness Elementary for a year and, prior to that, had a 12-year career in video production. He left that job to pursue a career in education because he wanted "to do something more fulfilling and to make a difference in children's lives." Tom taught third grade and also served as dean of students at RCES for more than three years.

"I enjoyed working with the staff at Rock Creek for all the years," he said. "I valued the opportunity (to be part of) an exceptional staff throughout my years with the Tahoma School District." Being part of the team that opened Rock Creek was "an outstanding experience," Tom added, and he appreciated Joan Watt's leadership during her years as principal.

Fellow Rock Creek teacher Cheryl Peerenboom said that both of her sons, Dylan and Sean, were fortunate to have Mr. Tschirhart as their third grade teacher. "Mr. T. was very funny and kind. We always loved him as a teacher," said Sean (Class of 2006). "Mr. T. was a wonderful teacher. He had a great sense of humor and made school fun. I really enjoyed his class," said Dylan (Class of 2004).

As a colleague, Cheryl said that Tom always made her day brighter with his keen observations and his quick wit. "Around the winter holiday period, Tom would display his 'Grinch toys' just to get a reaction from fellow staff members. If Tom did get a reaction, he would smile and laugh," she said. "Students and staff alike will miss this caring and passionate educator."

In retirement, Tom plans to enjoy spending time with friends, and to read and travel.

Tahoma is so grateful for your dedication to students, Tom. We thank you, and wish you a wonderful, relaxing time in retirement!