

To The Board of Trustees and Dr. Smith;

It is with great pleasure that I stand before you this evening to honor Chris Helmer as Classified Employee of the Month for November 2019. Chris started working for Rincon Valley on October 16, 2016 as a noon duty at Madrone, where his two daughters, Tayah and Ashlyn attend. His ability to be a positive role model to children shone through immediately. This led to additional hours of work, providing intervention in Kindergarten and 3rd grade. As a 3rd grade teacher at the time, Chris worked in my classroom and I was immediately struck with his calm, friendly demeanor and ability to keep kids on task and feeling successful.

The following year, Chris was hired as our PE paraeducator for upper grade students and also as a Special Education Assistant in one of our TK classes. We now had Chris on campus full time! In addition to those two roles, he took on coaching positions for both boys and girls basketball. This was, of course, on top of assistant coaching his daughter Tayah's competitive soccer team! His booming voice could be heard most of the afternoon as he corralled students and taught them physical education skills, problem solving, and good sportsmanship.

But something even more special was happening that year. Chris was finding his niche. His work as a special education assistant has been impressive, to say the least. Last year, and now this year as well, we've had students at Madrone who could use some extra support navigating their school experience and Chris is the perfect fit for them. He skillfully makes himself a part of the classroom culture and while he is there, he is supporting all the kids. He embodies the concept we all believe in, which is to "Be the One" for kids. He finds every opportunity to teach friendship skills and

scholarly attributes to our youngest Mustangs. They naturally gravitate toward him! At any given moment, you will see Chris leading a game of duck-duck- goose, tying a little ones shoe, participating in a kimochois circle (criss cross applesauce on the carpet even!), or monitoring a learning center in the classroom.

Colleagues shared with me these wonderful comments:

- Chris is kind, patient, nurturing and dedicated. He has a natural ability to connect with every student on a personal level. He has a way of communicating with each child; from the littles to the upper graders and meeting them where they are.
- He is fair and consistent, but always has his “Dad” hat on first. He always makes kids feel loved, cared for and heard! We are so lucky to have spent the past three years working closely with Mr. Chris!

I also had a chance to talk to his girls about their dad and they shared that, “ He always tries his hardest and is there for us and for James, but also the other kids. He’s responsible and always does the right thing. “

Please join me in congratulating Chris Helmer as Classified Employee of the Month for November, 2019.