

Meet the Neighbor

By Ann Lackomar



Meet the Neighbor

# Debbie Brockett

Life through the eyes of 89123 resident Debbie Brockett is seen as a colorfully crafted patchwork of ideas, inspirations, people, abilities and boundless opportunities. As principal of Silvestri Junior High School since last August, Debbie is committed to making sure that all of the school's students are given the educational tools to become successful adults. "I began my career as a special education teacher and loved being in the classroom, but even before I started in the education field, I had been working with children because I wanted to make an impact on their future lives," says Brockett.

Debbie and her husband Craig had been "live-in" house parents for a youth home. "We were the parents for nine young boys that were removed from their homes. This was full-time parenting, only allowing for eight hours a week away from the home. We enjoyed every minute of the experience." The couple had to leave the program after three years as they had taken on new positions with the school district. "We still maintain contact with many of the young men and several still refer to us as mom and dad, as we are the only parents they know. This is what truly shaped me as an educator, as I was able to see that students who face the most challenging situations can become amazing individuals with the right guidance and support."

Although Brockett has been making great strides at the junior high in her administrative role, she has drawn on her experiences with children requiring special educational needs to assist in creating and implementing programs that benefit all students. The school was recently one of seven schools in the district to receive the Inspiration Award, an honor that recognizes the efforts the school has made to excel in meeting the needs of the increasingly diverse student population in Las Vegas. "We received the Inspiration Award due to our commitment to the inclusion of all students," she said.

"Silvestri Junior High School staff has proven their commitment by opening the doors of opportunity for all students with disabilities. Special education students are taught in the general education setting to the fullest extent possible. They are always given access to the general education curriculum and are included in all school activities and clubs."

Brockett is quick to point out that this commitment has been led by a dedicated group of individuals that not only planned activities and events to help increase awareness of inclusion, but also provided training and support to the staff. It also took the entire team of teachers and staff at the school to recognize the success that has been achieved by the inclusion model to create a climate that encourages participation. "The amazing thing about Silvestri Junior High School is that the culture of the school allows and accepts the differences of all individuals." In addition, the school recognizes all areas of student achievement including academic and behavioral excellence, completion of all assignments and improvement.

Debbie's goals include continuing to increase the support systems for students to ensure that every child can find success. "I am going to focus on increasing the parental and community involvement so that our support systems can extend outside of the school building," she said.

Debbie Brockett is proud of her educational and career accomplishments, but attributes her successes to the abundant support she receives from her family, including husband Craig and daughters Kali and Lexia, along with an amazing team of teachers and staff that surround her at work. "I hope when our young adults leave the school they understand that with the right amount of hard work and a positive attitude, anyone can be successful."