

Learn About the COVID-19 Vaccine & Help Hazelwood Get Healthy!



HELP HAZELWOOD
GET HEALTHY!



As part of Hazelwood School District's *Help Hazelwood Get Healthy* public campaign, a wealth of information about the COVID-19 vaccine has been placed on the district's website. The goal is to help people make educated healthcare decisions. To learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine and pre-registration options, visit www.hazelwoodschoools.org.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Sharing the joy of learning

The Hazelwood School District's Teacher of the Year brings a love of learning to her science classes

By Charlotte Beard

The Hazelwood School District (HSD) recently announced its 2020-2021 Teacher of the Year – Dr. Kelly Taylor, a science teacher at Hazelwood West High School.

The Arnold, Missouri native started her teaching career with Saint Louis Public Schools at Carnahan High School in the 2007/2008 school year. She switched to the Hazelwood District-Hazelwood West High School in the 2016/2017 school year.

When Taylor was asked what inspired her to become a teacher she shared, “when I was a small child, I remember pretending to be a school-teacher. I would prepare lessons, teach friends how to make things, and give everyone an ‘A’ for doing a great job. (However), I experienced unpleasant and demeaning educational practices as a child. My early experiences in school were disappointing and by the third grade I grew to dislike school. I became more and more disinterested in education as the years went by and due to behaviors, attitudes, and comments made by teachers, I was convinced that education just ‘was not my thing.’ In fact, I left my school experience believing that I was on the ‘housewife track.’ The choices and decisions I made as an adult were greatly influenced by the limiting narratives communicated by the teachers in my life. Eventually, I reached a crossroads and decided to pursue opportunities that would release me from the limitations other (people) envisioned for my life.”

It took some time for Taylor as she developed her skills in a separate career.

“I was fortunate enough to find a job in which I quickly rose to a leadership and training position,” she said. “This experience built my confidence while helping me realize my calling to a sense of purpose to help others with not just gaining skills, but



Photo courtesy Hazelwood School District

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also gaining autonomy. I began seeing myself develop the critical skills of a teacher as I helped (people) I trained gain new skills—helping them gain confidence in their own abilities and ultimately become self-reliant. Fortunately, this affirming experience as an adult positively transformed my trajectory and led me back into the classroom, this time as a teacher.”

In a time where more women are being encouraged to become involved in STEM,

Taylor’s reason for choosing science over any other subject in which to become an educator is partially driven by her more positive experiences in her early years. She spoke of her favorite science teacher, Art Casey, who taught her to “appreciate the pursuit of knowledge in science.”

“The most influential person in my decision to become a science teacher was my

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