



QuEd up for Education

People and programs impacting our QCSD community

November 10, 2022

Aiding students to succeed

QCSD's aides express job satisfaction by the success of their students. "It's the most rewarding thing you can ask for in a job."

By Gary Weckselblatt

Jennifer Honrado knew something was up when she saw a group of student-athletes walking down the hallway carrying their jerseys. When one of them stopped in front of her, handed her his blue football jersey, and explained the "MyJersey, Your Impact" theme, she was moved to tears.

"It meant the world to me," Mrs. Honrado said. "It was so special. It made my week."

Mrs. Honrado is an instructional aide at Quakertown Community High School. And that interaction with football player John Eatherton, who thanked her for "being a posi-

tive influence in school and always smiling," "meant the world to me," she said.

It's the type of magic moment aides in the Quakertown Community School District often receive as they make a positive difference in the lives of students, some of whom have a 504 and/or an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Donna Soriano, who has worked as an instructional aide at Strayer Middle School for 18 years, recalled running into one student at the high school who had been a "handful. He saw me and broke down. He started crying and hugged me," she said. "I knew I had made a difference."



When John Eatherton recognized her for being a positive influence, QCHS instructional aide Jennifer Honrado said it "meant the world to me."

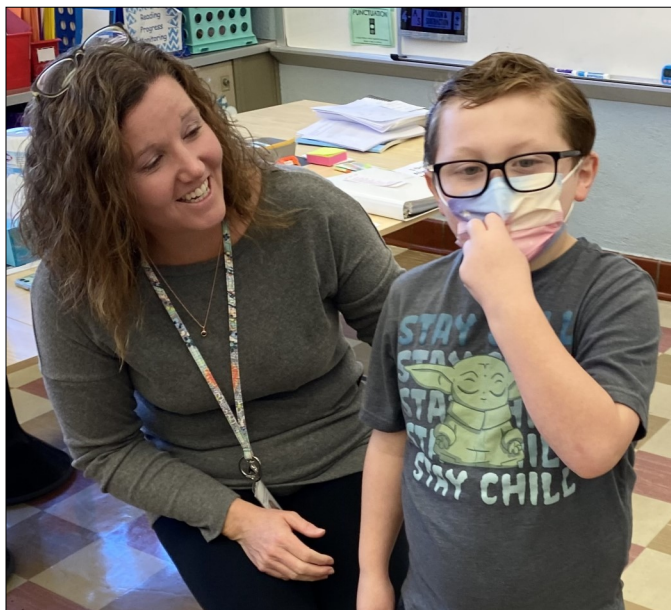
QCSD has opening for aides, both full- and part-time, in all buildings for grades K-12. There are general aides, instructional aides for both general learners and special education learners, and substitute aides. Work hours are conducive for parents, who can be off when their children are home, including summers and holidays.

"It's a great place to work," Strayer instructional aide Tracy Moyer said. "It can be frustrating, but also the most fun you'll ever have. It's so worth it to see that moment when kids make and achieve the goals they want to achieve. You help them, you encourage them, you believe in them and that helps keep them going. The best part is you see it in their face when it clicks."

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Wendy Stefenack, a learning support aide at Quakertown Elementary School, said "To see them succeed, whether emotionally or educationally, it's the most rewarding thing you can ask for in a job."



“Those small moments bring me here every day. Makes me feel so good to be so useful and helpful to everybody here.”

**Debra Graver,
Instructional aide, Trumbauersville**



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“Support Staff”

Aides among the difference makers in QCSD

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When that moment happens. ‘Oh, wait, I can do this.’ That’s what makes the hard days worth it and they start to believe in themselves.”

Debra Graver, in her 19th year as an instructional aide at Trumbauersville Elementary School, agreed.

“Whether it’s one-on-one or working in a small group learning letters and sounds. When it clicks for the kids, there’s nothing better than that,” she said. “One girl told me ‘I got this.’ Those small moments bring me here every day. Makes me feel so good to be so useful and helpful to everybody here.”

Mrs. Graver has all sorts of duties, including cafeteria, recess, main office, and meeting the buses for arrival and dismissal. “Getting kids where they need to go is the highlight of my day,” she said. “They always have so much to share with me. They just want someone to listen to them. It’s the connections you make and the rapport you build. They trust you. You’re their constant. That’s so important to them.”

She also appreciates the “gratitude and appreciation” shown to her by teachers. “I feel so valued as their wingman,” she said. “It’s very humbling knowing they know we help them and their kids.”

Wendy Stefenack, a learning support aide at Quakertown Elementary School, said whether she’s attending a football game or making a trip to the grocery store, a student will stop by to say hello. “It shows just the little bit of time I had with them made an impact,” she said. “You can’t put any amount of money on that. They continue to want to learn, that’s what I’m here for. To see



Jenn Jefferson, left, and Marie Lee, right, stand with a smiling student at the Sixth Grade Campus where they are instructional aides.

them succeed, whether emotionally or educationally, it’s the most rewarding thing you can ask for in a job.”

Marie Lee and Jen Jefferson, instructional aides at the Sixth Grade Campus, each spoke of the love they have for their jobs along with the teamwork they have with teachers and administrators to do the best they can for students.

“We’re a safe haven for them,” Mrs. Lee said. “Because we may spend time with them one-on-one or in a small group, they come to us before they might go to a teacher. They can let their guard down with us.”

“It’s so important to have that connection,” Mrs. Jefferson said. “They feel comfortable with us.”

They may also have the opportunity to see a student in two or three classes throughout the day to note

“patterns of behavior,” Mrs. Lee said. “There’s a chain of command. We make sure everything gets passed on to the teachers as they will with us.”

Student: Mrs. Bauman, do you have an unstapler?

Student: Melancholy is an awful big word for a three-letter word (sad)

Mrs. Bauman: I told a student he was always smiling.

Student: I know, I can’t even control it!

“It’s zingers like these that make my day,” she said.

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