



HERO

in education

Abby Sr. educator Jas Biring giving students the skills to make it in school.. and life



Childhood teacher inspired him to enter profession

Some teachers you never forget. For Jas Biring that was a teacher he had in Grade 5 and Grade 7, Mr. Dawson, and it always stuck in the back of his mind that maybe that was what he should do when he grew up.

And lucky for students at Abbotsford Senior, Biring stayed true to his feelings and entered the field of education.

One student in particular is ever so grateful for Biring choosing his teaching path as she nominated him for the Heroes in Education honour. Grade 10 student Tehya Ostrowercha gives Biring much of the credit for her succeeding in school, and also in life.

“He always makes time for his students,” she said. “He’s the only reason I passed science.”

Biring works in the Learning Services Centre, which aids students who have obstacles to learning such as dyslexia or slow processing. In the case of Ostrowercha, increased anxiety often makes learning a challenge.

“I have anxiety and often get stressed about work and he has been very understanding of that,” she said. “When a question is stressing me out he figures it out with me and if my mind is elsewhere he recognizes that and listens to what I have to say so we can figure it out.”

Biring started teaching in 1994 in Van-

couver before moving to Langley where he had quite an impact. He was running an intensive behaviour program in 2003 for students with anger, anxiety and substance abuse issues. After a three-year stint, funding was about to be yanked when students and parents staged a sit-in and a sleep-in in a portable at H. D. Stafford where he taught.

“They managed to get the program reinstated,” he fondly recalled. “They actually brought in a porta-potty as they were there for days. It was covered by the Vancouver media.”

It’s that kind of dedication and commitment to his profession that has made Biring much beloved by students, parents and colleagues alike. But he’s quick to point out that he doesn’t do it alone at Abby Sr. He relies heavily upon fellow educator Jan Koch.

“The two of us work together; we work in a partnership.”

Ostrowercha also singled out Koch in her nomination letter, calling her an “amazing teacher.”

Through Biring, students learn how

their brains work and often it’s not just about academics, but about how they are handling life.

“We want to get them through high school, but we need to give them the skills to handle life after they leave,” he said. “Problems will always come up after high school and they need to know how to handle them.”

While the COVID pandemic has been a nightmare for most schools, Biring said they have been lucky in his program that the team has stayed

strong and connected to the students.

“It was very much different when we were online only,” he said. “The personal connection wasn’t there, but Jan has been good about following up with the kids.”

Biring also mentioned how the historic November flood displaced many Abby Sr. students.

And yet, through it all, Biring finds himself arriving to work each morning still as passionate as ever for the work ahead.

“I joke with Jan that maybe I have six or seven years left and that we should retire as a team.”

“He always makes time for his students. He’s the only reason I passed science.”

Tehya Ostrowercha