



Beverly Sherwin is known for her lessons and her love for teaching

Third-grade teacher Beverly Sherwin is famous for her lessons on the rain forest and for reading the story of the Bell Witch on Halloween. Students in lower grades wait curiously for a chance to see the slides she took during her trip to the

Central American jungle in the summer of 1996 and students in older grades will never forget the day books flew off the shelf as she read a bewitching tale one October day of their third-grade year.

Mrs. Sherwin has been teaching at Overbrook since 1987. Only one other teacher has been here longer. All of Mrs. Sherwin's time has been in the third grade and that's the way she likes it.

"It's the perfect grade," she says, unabashedly smiling. "They come in reading and still in awe of teachers. They are respectful but they're not babies. They just soak everything up."

And Mrs. Sherwin does give them a lot to soak up, too. Her favorite subject to teach is religion because she says the students are very open and positive about studying their faith.

"I can ask them to write a meditation about the fourth station of the cross and you can't believe what they write," she said. "And it is so important to me that they look at religion as something they're good at."

Though she loves religion, she is more well-known around campus for her unit on the rain forest. In fact, a former student Brennan Sparta, OS '03, now a college freshman at Middle Tennessee State University studying aerospace administration, missed the day she showed her rain forest slides in third-grade. His youngest sister, Reed, is now in Mrs. Sherwin's class, so Brennan asked Mrs. Sherwin if he could come back to her class when she begins teaching the rainforest unit this year and shows her slides.

"The day we were supposed to go to watch the slideshow I was not in class and I was so disappointed," Brennan said. "I've always wanted to have the opportunity to go back and see it." So Mrs. Sherwin has promised to coordinate her slideshow this year with Brennan's schedule so he can finally see those pictures.

Mrs. Sherwin began teaching about the rainforest when it was a unit in the science book but she and her students soon developed a passion about the subject. So curious was she about these areas of the world that she applied to study for two weeks in the rainforest outside of Panama. Sister Dominic Mary, O.P., who was principal at the time, helped find funds to send Sherwin.

"We hiked in the jungle every day, we did studies and they taught us about things like the native bird population," Mrs. Sherwin said of her trip. "It was the most wonderful thing I've ever done."

On the trip, she also went to Bocas Del Toro in the Caribbean where the group visited a poor Guaymi Indian School. "The children lived in huts and the boys kept saying to us, 'Pen? Pen?' They had nothing."

When she got back to Overbrook, Mrs. Sherwin shared the story of the school with her class and they soon began a school-wide drive to collect supplies for the children there.

“We ended up sending seven boxes about the size of a dishwasher through the Peace Corps to the school,” she said.

The goal is for students to “develop a passion for something and to learn they can make a difference,” she said. The Guaymi school project is not the only one of its kind Mrs. Sherwin has spearheaded. Last year her brother and several friends visited Blessed Mother Teresa’s mission in India. He came back telling Mrs. Sherwin of all the supplies needed there. Mrs. Sherwin got her students involved in gathering everything from bandages to blankets for the sick in Mother Teresa’s mission.

“She is the consummate teacher,” said Beth Sparta, mother of Reed, Bevin and Brennan who have now all had Mrs. Sherwin as a teacher. “As a parent, everybody would want their child to have a teacher like Bev Sherwin. I cannot say enough about her.”

Lauren Theobald, a senior at St. Cecilia Academy, graduated from Overbrook in 2004 and still comes back to visit Mrs. Sherwin.

“She was just that teacher for me,” Lauren said. “She taught me self-discipline and she just sticks out for me.”

“This place is so very special to me,” Mrs. Sherwin said of Overbrook. “No where else I have taught have I seen an environment like this. It is just so faith-filled.”