

Kliwer named PRHS Teacher of the Year

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Matthew Fox 4-1-08

Endeavour Academy instructor Steve Kliwer has been named Paso Robles High School's Teacher of the Year.

Kliwer has led the Endeavour Academy program at PRHS for the past six years and said he was honored to have his efforts recognized by his peers.

"I realized just how many good friends I have and realized that people have really liked what I'm doing," he said.

School site teachers of the year are chosen by a vote of the staff. Kliwer will now represent PRHS during the district Teacher of the Year ceremony, which will be held later in the spring. He is the second science teacher to win the award in as many years, with Mark DiMaggio representing PRHS last year. DiMaggio went on to be named District Teacher of the Year and San Luis Obispo County Teacher of the Year.

Kliwer currently has about 110 students in the Endeavour Academy — teaching three sections of an introductory course, one Mechatronics Class and one Design Engineering class. Though science can sometimes be a turnoff for students, the Endeavour Academy has remained a popular option with students at PRHS.

"I'd rather teach science than anything else," he said.

"Not just because I like it but because it tends to challenge students in a different way than they've ever been challenged before. It pushes them to go beyond the book and push out on their own. At first it's scary, but by the end of the year they really get into it."

Kliwer recently had the opportunity to share his knowledge and some components of the PRHS Endeavour Academy with students in Japan. In addition to his work at PRHS, Kliwer is a QuarkNet Fellow.

According to a release from the group, QuarkNet is a partnership of high school teachers and physicists working in the field of high-energy physics and universities and laboratories across the country and it is headquartered at the Department of Energy's Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory headquartered in Batavia, Ill. Kliwer said he's been part of the group for the last 10 years.

As part of his work with the group, Kliwer traveled to work with teachers in Sendai, Japan from Feb. 27 through March 3, showing them the muon detector he uses as part of the PRHS Endeavour Academy program.



"As a QuarkNet Fellow, Steve helps other teachers integrate the cosmic ray muon detector into classroom use," Bob Peterson, of the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory's Education Office, said in a release. "This comes from his special knowledge of guiding students in the ways of science inquiry. He uses the cosmic ray project to let them plan and explore their own investigation."

Kliwer said the best part of the experience was opening a new door for students and teachers in Japan. There, learning is done through lectures and bookwork, but Kliwer helped introduce a hands-on component to learning with the muon detector.

"We wanted to teach them how to use the muon detector we've been using in our classes and help create a collaboration with them," he said. "They were very excited. In high school there they don't do much experimentation, so this was a new kind of program we brought them."

Getting people excited about science and learning is what Kliwer said he's enjoyed most about his work at PRHS.

"This is a good district and teachers here get very involved with what they're doing," he said. "The kids are great — they are why I do this. I like to learn and I want to be around people who are eager to learn."

Those interested in learning more about the Endeavour Academy can attend Family Science Night, which will be held at PRHS on Thursday, April 3 from 6 to 8 p.m. The event will offer visitors a chance to find out more about the Endeavour program and offer perspective students a chance to sign up for the Endeavour Academy program again next year.

For more information about the program, visit its Web site at www.pasoschools.org/endeavour.

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