

Why I Teach:

Kristina Reisinger

After feeling discouraged by her teaching experiences at two large public schools early in her career, Kristina Reisinger almost left the teaching profession entirely. But upon arriving to teach at Benchmark Summer Camp in 1995, she “fell in love with teaching all over again!”

Twenty-one years later, she still happily remains at Benchmark as a 7th grade language arts and science teacher, as well as a Benchmark Summer Camp supervisor. “This place has it all,” she said. “There are so many qualified and dedicated teachers in every school, but Benchmark is the place where the structured setting and the teacher-student ratio help each teacher spend some part of each day focused on meeting an individual’s needs as a learner.”

It is the individualized approach and making a difference in each student’s life that has kept Kristina so passionate about teaching at Benchmark. “Instead of having five classes of 30 students each and not really reaching each student, Benchmark allows me to teach a lesson to the whole class, and then be able to take that general lesson and challenge my students to use or apply it in their own unique way that helps them grow as a learner, thinker, and problem solver,” she said.

While teaching language arts remains a favorite for Kristina, she also has been enjoying her supervisory position for the Summer Camp program. “Not only do I get to observe top-notch teachers implement thoughtful, research-based lessons in meaningful ways to our summer students, but it’s great to know that after 20 years of teaching, I have something to give back to the Benchmark community in the form of mentoring advice and support,” she said.

Though she admits that middle school students keep her “on her toes,” Kristina is “glad to be a small part of the shaping process during such an incredible time of change and growth as these middle school students try on new identities, values, and ideas.” An added bonus for Kristina? Getting to see these same students thrive after leaving Benchmark. “I cannot express enough how much I treasure those students who choose to stay in touch and who remind me that there is not only a life after Benchmark, but there is an AMAZING life waiting out there for each student who passes through my class,” she said. “I’m honored when I can get a glimpse of just how amazing their lives have become.”



Tell us about yourself, Kristina!

Where did you go to school? I attended West Chester East High School, Penn State University for Secondary English Education, and did post-grad work at Penn State for Special Education.

What is your favorite memory from your school years? Finally deciding to take advantage of the peer tutoring program at my school to get help with geometry. In only a few sessions, I had completely turned around my understanding and my grade!

What was your favorite subject when you were in school and why? I took Latin for three years and loved it! I took comfort from it partly because as a “pure” root language, it seemed so logical and reliable. I also loved how it helped me understand so much more of the world around me.

What teacher most influenced you? Mr. Rudloff, in 10th grade English, who made my life miserable. He was the first teacher to demand that my writing make sense. I may

have resented him then, but I’m thankful for him now!

What is your favorite book? *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel.

Favorite inspirational quote? “We are put on this earth only once, so to limit ourselves to the familiar is a crime against our minds.” —Roger Ebert

What are your hobbies outside of Benchmark? Completing triathlons and relaxing through some kind of art discipline, like drawing or collage.

What is an interesting fact about you? For the past eight years, I have been going to Chester County Correctional Center once a week to teach and mentor women inmates.

Tell us about your family. I have been married for 14 years to my husband, Steve, who blessed me with my 21-year-old stepdaughter Shadi, and a 10-year-old daughter of our own, Greta.