



Featured Teacher: Lori Gaulrapp

"The proud feeling at the end when [students] received their books became something magical."

Cast of Characters

First-grade students in St. Louis, MO

Background and Setting

Gaulrapp has been a teacher for 26 years.

Memorable Learning

"One student used his experience to tell us not to be afraid to talk or ask questions."



"I have an 'Author's Wall' in my classroom featuring a photo of every class that has participated [in creating a classbook]. It's a quiet, yet bold, reminder to future authors."

A Book of Courage

For over a decade, Gaulrapp has brought the joy of publishing into her first-grade classroom, turning writing into something her students will never forget. This year's classbook carried a special theme: empowerment.

"Our book, 'Don't Be Afraid,' is a reminder to all of us that sometimes we are all afraid of something," said Gaulrapp.

Through this classbook topic, Gaulrapp guided her students to share experiences and lessons of courage, proving that even the smallest voices have powerful stories to tell.

From Struggles to Strength

The publishing process can look different for each class, and Gaulrapp showed her class how persistence can build confidence.

"Believing in themselves," said Gaulrapp. "The proud feeling at the end when they received their books became something magical."

That "magical" moment was worth every ounce of effort. Gaulrapp's students discovered what resilience looks like and the

joy of holding a published book with their names inside.

"They loved seeing their ideas come to life," she said.

The Student Who Found His Voice

Among the many proud moments, one story stands out to Gaulrapp. To this student, it wasn't just about writing; it was about finding confidence in a new setting.

"One student began this year speaking no English," said Gaulrapp. "He used his experience to tell us not to be afraid to talk or ask questions. He now no longer uses a translator and communicates in English. His page is very personal to him."

What started as a challenge blossomed into confidence. Today, his page doesn't just tell his story—it stands as proof that writing can be a bridge to language, learning and community.



Lights, Camera and #ProudAuthors

When the classbooks finally arrived, Gaulrapp made sure the celebration was as big as her students' achievement.

"They had a red carpet party, a book signing party and we had a parade through the school showing off their masterpiece," she said.

Gaulrapp's first graders started as students, and now they are also real, published authors.

Inspiring Next Year's Class

Even after the red carpet is rolled up, Gaulrapp keeps her students' legacy alive with a powerful visual in her classroom.

"I have an 'Author's Wall' in my classroom featuring a photo of every class that has participated [in creating a classbook]. It's a quiet, yet bold, reminder to future authors," said Gaulrapp.

Each photo on her "Author's Wall" serves as more than a memory, it's an invitation for the next group of authors to dream big, write boldly and know their words have power.

Advice to Teachers

For any teacher wondering if they should publish a classbook, Gaulrapp's advice is simple and sincere.

"Give it a try! Set a reasonable deadline," she said.

As Gaulrapp has shown for 12 years, these books aren't just a class activity, they're confidence-builders, keepsakes and lifelong reminders that no dream is too big when you're brave enough to write it down.



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