

# BRING ON THE TEENS

By Virginia Prairie

Teaching has been the career of my ancestors since the beginning of time. In fact, those before me may not have invented the wheel, but they kept busy teaching others how to improve their lives with this useful invention. As time went on, we were known throughout the land as pedagogical guides.

With a history as rich as mine, what other choice did I have? Teaching is now a calling, not a career. My blood flows apple red and the chalky whites of my eyes burn for the chance to experience the excitement of knowledge on a young student's face.

Not only do I love teaching; I actually live for teaching young teenagers! Adolescence is such an important time in our lives. With bouncing hormones and aching bodies, it is vital for these students to have advocates praising them and boosting their self-esteem.

Structure, movement, ownership, and especially laughter are all crucial in middle grades education. At this age, structure is lacking in the lives of many kids. My classroom provides structure as well as consistency in order for students to feel in control of their environment at all times. Students know what is expected of them and are not surprised by daily changes and interruptions within our classroom.

Growing, aching bones need comfort as well as movement. My classroom is equipped with homemade pillows for students to sit on while their bodies are adjusting into adulthood. I also encourage students to move around the room. Whether we are involved in group projects, role-playing exercises, or study games, minds are more receptive when students are rotating within our classroom.

Adolescents do not have control over many decisions in their family's life. Therefore, I try to give them ownership in their classroom. Bulletin boards, walls, and room configurations can be such outlets for young, creative minds. Students love to decorate and add their own touches to their environment. Although curriculum is not debatable, the many ways to tackle it are. Students are more willing to learn when they are given the opportunity to create lessons and projects.

This philosophy of education requires my role to be a facilitator; students see me as a learner and as an equal part of the classroom. Many teachers do not believe in this style. These teachers are also missing out on getting to know their students on so many different levels. Students trust teachers who laugh, cry, make mistakes, and are human.

As a young teaching couple, my husband and I are excited about the lessons and students ahead. Overseas teaching would be an experience of a lifetime. The chance to live in foreign lands and learn about fascinating cultures is an opportunity that we are not willing to miss.

# Virginia Prairie

## PROFILE

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- ❖ Certified Teacher of Middle Grades English and Social Studies with Two Years Classroom Experience

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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**Eighth Grade English and Geography Teacher**      Lexington, Virginia  
Maury River Middle School      August 1999-present

- ❖ Implemented Reader's/Writer's Workshop;
- ❖ Developed World Geography units based on the five themes of geography;
- ❖ Created two exploratory classes: Public Speaking and Research;
- ❖ Worked with special education students with broad ability ranges;
- ❖ Coached an award-winning Destination Imagination team;
- ❖ Integrated technology in the classroom;
- ❖ Organized an after-school theater arts program;
- ❖ Instructed a county-wide in-service on Reader's/Writer's Workshop

**Student Teacher**      Zionville, North Carolina  
Mabel School      January 1999-May 1999

- ❖ Taught sixth, seventh, and eighth grade English/Social Studies;
- ❖ Directed a student play involving Japanese fairy tales;
- ❖ Developed teaching strategies and classroom management skills;
- ❖ Offered a full time position for the following school year

## SPECIAL SKILLS AND TRAINING

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- ❖ Extensive training in Reader's/Writer's Workshop;
- ❖ Attended a seminar on Writing across the Curriculum;
- ❖ Computer literate: PC's and Macintosh;
- ❖ Directed five student productions

## ACHIEVEMENTS

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- ❖ Recipient of the M.M. Morgan Educational Scholarship for academic excellence;
- ❖ Member of Kappa Delta Pi, an International Honor Society in Education;
- ❖ Alumni member of the Collegiate Middle Level Association;
- ❖ Chancellor's List: Spring 1998, Fall 1997;
- ❖ Dean's List: Summer 1999, Spring 1999, Fall 1998;
- ❖ Awarded Student Teacher of the Year in 1999

## **EDUCATION**

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**Appalachian State University**

Boone, North Carolina  
1997-1999

Earned Bachelor of Science in Middle Grades Education; graduated Cum Laude

## **CERTIFICATION**

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The State of North Carolina Department of Education

- ❖ Middle Grades English and Social Studies

## **REFERENCES**

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Also available through Search Associates

- ❖ **Russell Crance**

Assistant Principal at Maury River Middle School  
600 Waddell St. Lexington, Virginia 24450  
540 462 3773

- ❖ **Lee McLaughlin**

Eighth Grade Team Leader/Teacher  
600 Waddell St. Lexington, Virginia 24450  
540 462 3773  
[mrmac@rockbridge.net](mailto:mrmac@rockbridge.net)

- ❖ **Linda Cummings**

Owner of Blue Ridge Office Supplies/Parent of Student  
929 Maury River Road Lexington, Virginia 24450  
540 463 4481  
[cummingslj@hotmail.com](mailto:cummingslj@hotmail.com)

## **PERSONAL**

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**Contact Information:**

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