

2020 CTE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

ANNIE FRIESEMA

Family & Consumer Sciences

Odyssey Early College and Career Options

Co Springs District 11

Annie Friesema is a caring teacher who values her students' success, encouraging all her students to follow their career goals which is just one of the reasons why she is so deserving of the 2020 Colorado CTE Teacher of the Year award. She is the reason we continue to believe in the potential of education to change lives, disrupt poverty and lift the human spirit.

It is important to understand that Annie alone teaches a Paraprofessional Educator program. Years in the making, this program is now a hallmark of Annie's creativity and perseverance. Annie shepherds students as they engage in our education community at the most fundamental support level that we have in our schools. The kinds of students she nurtures blossom in this program. She shows kids who have too often heard "no" or "not you" that they may contribute meaningfully to the lives of children and be an integral part of any school's team. Sure, they earn college credits, which Annie's unique qualifications assure, and they volunteer service hours across the district in special education programs, but more importantly they build pride in themselves. At a career panel two years ago, one of Annie's former students, now employed in the district as a paraprofessional, articulated the impact perfectly when she captured the audience by conveying the grace that Annie's teaching had brought to her life and now the lives of all those that she impacts.

In Annie's mentoring, she has helped open and expand FCS programs in Colorado Springs. Every year she focuses on how to make the programs better and more relevant to students in preparing them for careers in education and life beyond high school. Annie encourages and supports her colleagues in FCS and other education careers. She presents and shares ideas at professional development opportunities and is always an email or phone call away for quick help and last-minute ideas. She is an event lead at FCCLA state conferences, serves as department chair, serves on advisory board committees and attends/presents at professional development conferences locally, statewide and nationally.

Anyone who has had an opportunity to meet and work with Annie Friesema has had the blessing to be encouraged and supported on a level most never get the opportunity to experience. FCS and Colorado CTE is honored to have her as a part of the team.

Congratulations, Annie!