

If ever there were a person with the true heart of a teacher, it was Julie Arellano. Since having lost our beloved friend and colleague, we, her family from Skyline Vista Elementary, have been sharing daily doses of tears, laughter, hugs, and stories about our Julie.

Students too, have shared their love of a great teacher. Glenda, only eight years old said of Julie, "She was nice. She helped me with words I didn't know. She let us pick stickers." Yahaira shared, "She was a nice teacher. She was pretty and she helped me read. I'm so sorry cancer came to you." Vicky added, "She helped us when we got stuck on a word. That was sweet."

These innocent and honest words from her students paint the picture of a teacher who will be truly missed. They also reflect the legacy of a teacher who has made a difference.

In preparation for this celebration of Julie's life today, Skyline teachers have poured out similar memories and stories, collected in Memory and Honor of her 54 wonderful years of life.

We initially thought to read our full list of "fifty-four sweet things" about Julie. Julie, however, loved it when the business of a meeting was kept brief and to the point. She knew that the real heart and soul of any meeting was the personal connections made before and after the official agenda items. That being said, we decided to share a few of our fondest memories of Julie:

- She loved a good gossip, especially about bad TV like about Real Housewives*
- Julie had a great collection of shoes to make any teacher envious, especially Danskos. She had great style, and loved bright colors. Her nails, eyelashes and hair enhanced every outfit (and when her hair needed to be colored she had Peter to remind her to get to her hairdresser). We loved her purse collection, including the wine purse and the "we won in Vegas" set.*
- Julie's long lunches were notable. If she couldn't go out, her friends came to her. Skyline really has 2 lunchrooms – the official staff lounge and Julie's room.*
- Julie was infamous for her meeting misbehavior. She was always texting cocktail emojis, checking other websites and doing everything but the business as hand.*
- Today, Jan 23rd is National Handwriting Day. It wouldn't be complete without mentioning Julie's ability to write backwards, upside down with both hands, especially with a chisel point Sharpie. Boy, did she love her school supplies. Stickers, book tape and smelly markers – we all knew who to go to for the good stuff.*
- Classic Rock. Julie's favorite. Elton John, Journey, Foreigner, Lynard Skynard. She was the ultimate rock chick.*
- Food – Julie had a soft spot for Mexican food, especially guac, minus the heat. At workday lunches she always ordered a side of alfredo, when available. She loved Jody's monkey bread (who doesn't) and would never turn down a sweet treat after lunch.*
- As we all know, Julie was a sun worshipper. She always seemed to be planning the next warm weather vacation. We know she's on a beach, near a palm tree, soaking up the sun somewhere now.*

- *As we said earlier, Julie loved a little gossip, but in all seriousness, she always lent an ear to a friend. She held no judgment, only support. She was truly a good friend.*
- *We will forever miss her humor. Julie was an easy target to make laugh. She boosted so many of our egos making us think we were funny. If she didn't get the joke she would beg to be let in.*
- *Her hugs were the best*
- *She loved dogs, so much so she took Laurie's dog, Ollie home for a weekend and kept him.*
- *Julie's mom, Sheila. The mom/daughter relationship we all envy. Julie shared her mom with her friends, her students, and our school. Sheila would join us weekly to read with kids (usually the ones that needed a warm heart and also drove Julie crazy). The best part was hanging with Julie and Sheila and the lunch Sheila brought on those days - always quite the spread.*
- *Louis. The love of her life. She loved to tell us about their college days, vacations, trips from when the girls were young, Louis' new toys or cars, house projects, or about going to concerts.*
- *Brittanie and Carissa - her world. You could spot her texting or talking with them a few times a day. She was so happy to become a grandma to Sophia. She was head over heels for her. We even FaceTimed her a few times from work after she was born. She had so much fun planning Brittanie's wedding. We were so happy to be able to celebrate that special day with her and your family.*

In the spirit of the things we just shared, we sure encourage you to connect with stories, memories, tears, and laughter as you each share your own contributions to the ever growing "fifty-four sweet things."

54 years of a kindhearted, generous, and happy life were too few for our Julie. Similarly, any list of 54 enduring memories of our colleague, friend, and family member are only but a few of the countless feelings and stories that will live on in all of our hearts and minds. Julie passionately loved stories, especially children's stories, for their humor, emotion, excitement, curiosity, and all around fun spirit. She knew that it was not the length of the story that ever mattered in the end, but that a great story, itself, is what matters. Julie's own story came to an end too suddenly. But former students, friends, and family here today, and here in spirit, can take heart and find solace knowing that her story mattered, and it matters still.

We all love and miss you Julie.