



Patricia Stuhler	154
ROBS History Project	10/10
Exit Interview:	4.29.10

"My name is Patricia Stuhler, and I've been teaching at Oak Park Elementary School for the last twenty-one years. I've worked in the Brentwood School District for twenty-five years. I've always worked with Special Needs Children, Learning Disabilities and it's been a great honor and privilege to work with children and I'm going to miss doing this so very much. Children have been so much an essential part of my life, and I've learned so very much from bring their teacher. I think they've taught me so much more than I've taught them. My husband also worked for Brentwood for over thirty five years and he's been retired for seven years and he's been very anxiously waiting for me to retire so when this year came around he said, "Is it now?" and I said, "Okay, now."

"So, I've bitten the bullet, believe me it's a tough decision to make. "Was there one particular year of service that stands out for you? " "Absolutely! It was 2007. That was the year that I had a unique class of children and in that class I had for the first time in my Special Ed Career an entire class of Fifth Graders and of those fifteen, five out of the group went back to regular classes. I had one child who achieved the first award for writing in the fifth grade in the district. It was such a monumental year; the growth was incredible, the children were so unique and so rewarding, such a wonderful, wonderful year. I'll never forget it. It was quite an accomplishment, and the children come back on the honor roll and they come back to me and say, "Oh, Mrs. Stuhler, I'm a manager now and I'm in Disney Land doing this for the food companies." It makes you feel wonderful inside. You know, children who were struggling so much with their abilities to read or write or do math and they come back as productive members of society. It's an overwhelmingly great feeling.

Have I ever been frightened to come to work? "Yes! When I taught emotionally disturbed children. There was one particular class that had a lot of severely disturbed children who back then, brought in a lot of weapons, knives, Chinese stars. Thank goodness I bonded with one of the children and he let me know what the plan of this one little boy was for the afternoon. That was a lot of years ago. That must have been about 1990 that that happened. Yes, I was frightened that one particular time but everything worked out well. I had a severely dyslectic little boy who could not read fifth grade letters or identify 1.

the sounds and by the end of the year was able to read on the second grade level. And when he could do that the proudest moment of his day was when he could go to the library to choose a book. And that was one of the most wonderful and rewarding experiences I have ever had. I used to believe that when they came up with a cure for Alzheimer's disease, that somehow that would correlate with the ability of the child to read and that the same part of the brain in the younger person was effected in the brain of the older person and that would open up the opportunity to help children who were having difficulty. But to answer the question you asked, as to why there are children who are able to look at a piece of paper and right away know the configuration of a word and right away see the pattern and are capable of reading while another child will look at it and struggle and have the worst struggle of his life -- I was hoping that would eventually happen if we could eliminate all learning disabilities in the children. That would be a wonderful thing so they could all learn on an equal level".

"I know that the children feel I was very caring and concerned for and about them – and also very fair as far as discipline was concerned and what I expected them to do. I think my staff knew that I did things earnestly and with my heart to the best of my ability for the children. I dedicated whatever I had to them."

What advice would I like to give to the person who might be coming in to replace me in my classroom? *"My gosh! There is so much to know about a young person. Be tender, be supportive, acknowledge their accomplishments no matter how small they are, be happy just to be with them, and they know it. They know when you want to be with them, so just be yourself and be thankful that you have been chosen into this profession because it is the most honorable profession of them all. I just think it is".*

Today is Retirement Information Day: 04 - 28-29- 2010

Patricia was a Special Education Teacher at Oak Park. She had twenty-five years in the District caring for the children she loved. Hers is an emotional portrait of a dedicated and sincere professional, who traces her career through years of fulfillment, overcoming challenges and alluding to the difficulties of children learning to read. She tells us how she'd like to be remembered and concludes with a few profound words of advice for her successor.