



Nationally recognized Montgomery sticks to a simple philosophy

BY JOHN HAUER

For the Daily Call
editorial@dailycall.com

PIQUA — Wilder Intermediate School principal Curt Montgomery has been in education for 27 years. A 2003 nationally recognized Middle School Principal of

the Year, he has a simple, but to the point philosophy. "I teach each child as if that child was my own," he said.

Montgomery grew up around Newark. He graduated from Utica High School in 1979. Much of his high school time involved the Boy Scouts where he earned his

Eagle Scout ranking in 1977. He enrolled at Miami University and majored in political science and foreign affairs. He received his bachelor's degree in poly sci in 1983, but an undergraduate experience changed his focus



MIKE ULLERY/STAFF PHOTO

Wilder Intermediate School principal Curt Montgomery works in his office at the school last week.

See Point/Page 2

Point

Continued from page 1

and his life.

"I had a work-study job with Miami that helped me pay the bills," he said. "I started out washing dishes and soon realized that was something I didn't want to do." He saw a work-study opportunity as an aide at a local elementary school. "I loved working with the kids," he said. "It was so rewarding that I changed my goals and decided to become a teacher."

Marilyn Young, a first-grade teacher at Kramer Elementary, the work-study site, and the principal Carl Garnett suggested to Montgomery that he would make a great teacher. "They were influential in convincing me that education was the best path for me," Montgomery said.

He immediately re-enrolled in the Miami University Master's of Teaching program and became certified in education. Later, he received a second master's degree in educational administration from Wright State University.

Montgomery was hired by the Preble Shawnee School District to teach fifth grade. After three years, he switched to first grade for a year, then, taught eighth grade math for a year. Next, he took his newly earned Administration degree to the Clark Shawnee school system and became the assistant principal at Reid Primary and Middle School. When the principal left for another position, Montgomery was promoted and served as principal until 2004.

"I was principal and athletic director for the building which was grades one through eight," he said. "I was about to be named the principal of the kindergarten building, also. I knew I would never be home or have time for my family." That prompted a move to Piqua City Schools, and he became the principal at Wilder.

Wilder houses 265 students in grades 4, 5, and 6 with a staff of 30 people. The building will be replaced when construction opens a single new intermediate school on the site of the old hospital. "We are excited about the new facilities," Montgomery said. "We have a lot of building problems. There are fire hoses and auxiliary sump pumps in our basement because of the regular flooding. The gym floor is developing a hump and becoming wavy. It seems there is always a furnace or a boiler down. We really do need the new school."

Over the last nine years, Montgomery has unified the building's discipline plan. He has promoted Science Night from a building event to a district event. He has led teachers in researching, studying, and implementing highly effective

teaching methods. "We, teachers and administrators, are learners, too," he said.

Montgomery credits the Wilder staff with providing a successful environment for students. "Our staff is phenomenal. They work extremely hard," he said. "The staff takes a personal interest in each student. We look for a student who needs a champion, and our staff steps up to be that champion."

In 2003, Montgomery was named one of Ohio's two representatives as Middle School Principal of the Year. "We met in Washington, D.C., and we toured the White House and the State Department," he said. "It was a once in a lifetime experience." Montgomery's award was a specially engraved old time school bell in a glass case that has a prominent spot on the bookshelf in his of-

file.

Away from school, Montgomery enjoys travelling to different destinations for new adventures. Many of his adventures involve the Boy Scouts. He is an assistant leader for Troop 325 in Englewood. "I've been backpacking at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, scuba diving in the Florida Keys, and on a wagon train in the Grand Tetons," he said. "This summer I plan on sailing on a schooner off the coast of Maine."

He and his wife Susan, a second grade teacher for Twin Valley Schools, have been married 27 years. They have a son and a daughter. Marie is in her first year as a special needs teacher for East Knox Schools near Mt. Vernon. Gene, also an Eagle Scout, is a freshman at Muskingum University majoring in criminal justice.

A Tradition of Excellence

Legacy
MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

* Your 1st choice for complete Home Medical Equipment

Lift Chairs

1990 W. Stanfield, Troy, OH
45373 • 937-335-9199
www.legacymedical.net
2543484