

Sprinkling of Spanish

Oakley 2nd graders learn a word a day

By Darrell Cloom
staff writer

Not many American second graders learn a new Spanish word every day.

Then again, not many have Kathleen Cullen for a teacher.

Cullen, who last year won Michigan's top award for student teaching, turned down job offers from as far away as California to teach at Oakley Elementary School in the Walled Lake School District.

The 26-year-old Detroit native said the Walled Lake district was appealing because it was in the forefront of implementing top-notch programs in such subjects as writing and language.

But Cullen also had a personal reason for choosing the district. "I love the Lakes Area," she said, "and I really wanted to teach out here."

CULLEN, WHO is fluent in Spanish, said she teaches Spanish words to her second graders because language is an important tool for learning to respect different people and their cultures.

And she ought to know. She spent three years in Chile — first as an exchange student during her junior year of high school and later as a bilingual secretary for a travel agency.

Closer to home, Cullen last year was selected by the Michigan Association of Teacher Educators as the state's best student teacher. She was completing her student teaching in Ann Arbor when she submitted to MATE a video of her class. She was chosen the winner from among more than 200 candidates.

people

"WE WERE so proud that we could attract the quality of teacher that stood behind this award," Oakley Park principal Sylvia Whitmer said.

October 31, as students filtered into her classroom, Cullen explained her philosophy of teaching. "I want the children to do a lot of exploring," she said. "I want to make them feel safe and secure in class so that they will explore and not be afraid to ask questions. I help them learn to learn, instead of just teaching them."

CULLEN ATTENDED Our Lady of Mercy School in Farmington Hills and later was a graduate of Eastern Michigan University, where she majored in Spanish. She also received a minor in bilingual education, science and elementary curriculum.

Her students cited several reasons why they like her. Seven-year-old Maria Laino summed up those reasons, saying that Cullen "is a nice teacher. She is good to us and lets us do fun stuff like crafts."

As a next venture, Cullen said she would like to receive a master's degree and study the Japanese language. She said the Walled Lake district, which includes northwest Farmington Hills, will need teachers who know the Japanese language because of the increasing number of Japanese students moving to the area.



Kathleen Cullen, an Oakley Park Elementary School teacher, draws her students into a Halloween tale.

For now, she will continue to include Spanish in her daily lessons. "It helps the children have a better understanding that not every-

body is the same," she said. "And it helps them learn that they should support each other and respect each other."

Area Germans cheer opening of the Wall

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"Little things have been changing. The changes are slow, though. And people there don't take this seriously — they don't trust the government. They've done this before, opening the borders a little and then closing it again," Mrs. Kast said.

EAST GERMANS, according to Mrs. Kast, are looking forward to being able to travel to the West, read Western literature and "have exchanges with all people, not just other Communist countries. The indomitable German spirit is what has made the changes possible, said Wilhelm Kast, who owns DP Services Inc. in Livonia.

"People there are well educated. Sooner or later, the government will have to realize that either they let the people vote with their feet and leave or just let them vote," Mr. Kast said.

East Germans who decide to move to West Germany will have an easier

time of settling in because of the common language, though Mr. Kast said he hopes the East Germans will stay in their homeland and work toward a democratic government.

Students in the French, German and English immersion program at Lycee International School participated in a program on the liberalization of East German policies Friday afternoon. The school is in Southfield at the former Birmingham Evergreen School.

The program featured displays, discussions and a parade. Teacher Peter Kempa told students in kindergarten through the fifth grade that it is a time of celebration for all Germans and that the symbolic crumbling of the Berlin Wall is a very historic event.

"I was born in Hanover, which is about 30 minutes from the East-West border," Kempa said later. "I had tears in my eyes when I watched the television coverage. Everything has happened so fast."

Project adds trees, lights to Farmington Center lot

The third phase of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority redevelopment project will add lighting and trees to a city parking lot at an unknown cost.

Sixteen islands with two trees and one pedestrian light each will be placed around the lot at the Downtown Farmington Center, better defining walking and driving areas in the lot.

The center parking area runs from Farmington Road to Grove Street and Grand River to Orchard Street.

A cost for this phase of the project has not yet been determined, said Wendy Strip Sittsamer, DDA executive director.

The fountain area in the center of the lot will be reviewed and possibly changed as part of the project.

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For patients with arthritis, a frequent question is: "What can I do?"

Activity for someone with arthritis involves the match-up of joints, stamina and attitude. Your physician, seeing you in the office, often cannot evaluate all three inputs, however, your body makes this assessment: it communicates its decisions through the media of pain.

You can judge the safety of an activity by the type of discomfort it brings on. If walking causes you an ache similar to what you feel as muscles warm up, then continue on. But if the pain is a sharp discomfort, then stop.

You cannot listen to the exhortations of friends who tell you that you should "work through the pain." These individuals may be well meaning, but they do not understand the pain of arthritis comes from joint inflammation and from muscles which even at rest are tending to splint joints. More activity, when these conditions prevail, only worsens your arthritis.

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