

work



What is the most important thing you've learned?

I don't know if what you teach is as important as learning how to **put yourself at the service of your students' learning**. This is the holy grail of teaching.

—Holly Walter Kerby

A person is **never too old** to ask for help.

—Arlene Silveira

Two things: Make sure you teach in a way that reaches all of your students, and continue educating yourself. **You can never have enough knowledge** when it comes to educating young children.

—Tanya Howe

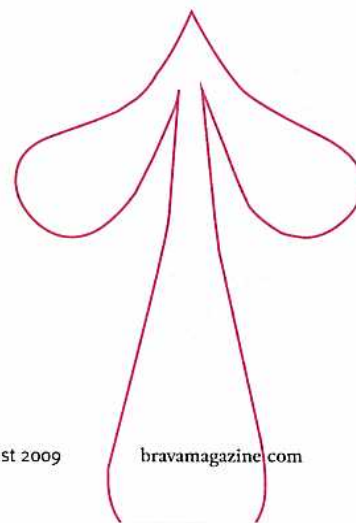
Live and Learn

Three different women with one common passion: education

Before we know it, the lazy days of summer will be replaced with homework, pop quizzes and report cards. Though it's easy to get caught up in the back-to-school routine, let's not forget the inspiring women working behind the scenes to make our education system tick.

Meet three women from various corners of the education realm: Tanya Howe, Holly Walter Kerby and Arlene Silveira.

Howe, a passionate, small-town special education teacher is proud to teach in the community in which she grew up. Walter Kerby, an innovative instructor with eclectic interests, seamlessly weaves the most unlikely subjects together for a grand performance. And Silveira, the president of the Madison Metropolitan School District Board of Education, makes the needs of all children a top priority.





Tanya Howe, 27

*Kindergarten special education teacher
Early Learning Center, Mount Horeb*

How did you find your way into the education field?

I'd always wanted to become a teacher and always enjoyed working with kids. My dad was a high school teacher and inspired me to follow his lead. I feel very lucky to be teaching in the same district he taught and also where I grew up.

What do you love about teaching special education?

I enjoy going into all of the different classrooms and working with the teachers and students. I also love that each day brings a new challenge.

What is the "darndest thing" a student has ever said to you?

Before I got married, I went by Miss P., and a student once said, "Hold on Miss P., I have to pull up my drawers," referring to his need to pull up his pants before moving to the next activity!

Tell us about a particularly heart-warming moment.

I was married last December. For a wedding present, my early childhood students and their families gave me a huge flowerpot decorated with all of my students' handprints. Each family also made a flower with a picture of their student and put it inside along with inspirational poems. Painted along the top of the flowerpot were the words, "Bloom where you grow."

As I walked into the reception hall at my wedding, I passed the gift table and saw the gift they'd made and it brought tears to my eyes. I still don't know how the families put it together without me knowing, but it's definitely something that I will cherish for the rest of my life.



Holly Walter Kerby, 54

*Chemistry and playwriting instructor
Madison Area Technical College*

How did you find your way into the education field?

After graduate school, I worked as a chemist and then as a manager in the industry. I was hired to teach a class on the mountain dulcimer (the musical instrument) at the Wisconsin Union and loved everything about it—my students, the learning process, figuring out what came next. So I got certified to teach.

You teach chemistry and playwriting?

People are surprised when I tell them that. I think knowing how to write a play is a great asset in teaching anything. It gives you the know-how to present topics in an engaging way. I also think chemistry is the science of metaphor, so theater is a natural ally to chemistry education.

And you write plays as well?

I started writing plays when I took my first teaching job. Since then, they've been published and performed across the country.

Tell us about your brainchild: Fusion Science Theater.

Fusion Science Theater began in 2006 when I pulled together some chemistry and theater colleagues at MATC and actor friends from Mercury Players Theatre to put on a show called the Amazing Chemical Circus. I'd used various theater techniques to teach chemistry to my students at MATC and wanted to try them in an outreach setting. The show was our experiment.

The way we combine science and theater really works—our data shows that kids learn the concepts and feel like they can do science after the show. One child wrote us, "This is the best science show in the history of science shows!" That's very gratifying.



Arlene Silveira, 50

*President, Board of education
Madison Metropolitan School District*

How did you find your way into the education field?

I went to college to become a high school biology teacher and was certified to teach in Massachusetts. However, I was intrigued by science and went on to graduate school in molecular biology. I have worked for biotechnology companies throughout my professional career.

However, as a parent, I actively participated in school PTOs for many years. As president of both the Leopold Elementary and Cherokee Middle School PTOs I became involved in school board-related matters. I then made the decision to run for school board and was elected to my first term in 2006 and my second term in 2009.

What challenges do you see facing Madison's schools?

Madison is a changing community with respect to demographics and the needs of our students. As needs expand, we face a tension: If you are helping group A then you must not be helping group B, which becomes exacerbated with tight budgets. Our biggest challenges are: 1) Meeting the needs of all children; 2) Embracing diversity in our schools; 3) Ensuring all of our schools are "attractive" education options for our community.

If you could teach any subject, what would you choose?

Study Skills. It sounds mundane, but when students have the skills needed to organize, synthesize, comprehend and translate to action, it helps them not only in their learning but also in improving their self-esteem. These are skills that can be used throughout life.

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