



The stacks of notebooks, pad paper, pencil cases, and knapsacks on bookstore floors can only mean it's that time of the year again. Although I haven't been in school either as a student or a teacher in a while, the thought of it still brings back the old feelings: little butterflies of excitement in the stomach, buzzing nervousness, and my heart dropping like a stone at the realization that it's another year of hard work.

With this in mind, we're giving you a mix of articles and features in this back-to-school issue of *Star Teacher*. We hope that while harnessing your excitement and taking advantage of newness, it also addresses possible worries that many teachers have, whether new or tenured, at the start of a new school year.

We have new ideas for you to try: "getting to know you" activities, easy-to-do book projects, and games you can use in class. We talk about discipline in practical terms and offer a quiz that reveals your own classroom management style. On a more personal note, we face the problem of insecurity. Most of us are plagued by negative thoughts that we're not good enough, don't deserve good things in life, are too tall/short/fat/thin... Enough said! Read the article on page 14.

One of the things I love about this job is getting to meet people in the field of education. I got to know tech-savvy teacher Malou Abuel of Kalumpang Elementary School, who relates how she got her Grade 4 class to write letters to their favorite authors. She then emailed these authors with her student's messages. Augie Rivera, one of the writers to respond to her, is featured in our Writer Q&A. Lastly, Sol Austria of Bilaran Elementary School generously allowed us to prettify her and modeled for our special on looking special. We're sure you'll agree that she does look wonderful.

Read on, and happy new (school) year!

P.S. As I type this, the voter's indelible ink has just begun to fade from my index finger. Hopefully, by the time you read this, we would have a democratically elected president installed in Malacanang.

But for now, the ugly stain on my nail is a reminder of our recently concluded elections, which many believe to be the most orderly we've seen in a long time. It also reminds me that we need to thank you for your service, patience, dedication—heck, just your willingness to show up and work 24 hours straight! And this was in the face of tiredness, mind-numbing counting, cranky voters, and for some, even corruption or violence. As is usually the case, your efforts often go unnoticed, but they make a huge difference in people's lives. THANK YOU.

Therese
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF STAR TEACHER?

Please let us know, because it's your magazine. Tell us which articles were most and least helpful, which ones you enjoyed and which ones you didn't. Above all, we'd love to hear your ideas and suggestions for future issues. As an incentive, we're going to feature a reader's letter in every succeeding issue, and the sender will receive this special gift:

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Star TEACHER
Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation, Inc.
35/F Petron Mega Plaza
Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. Makati City
Telefax: 889-8135
Cellphone: 0927-6459110
Email:
teachers@readerstransform.com

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TEACHER'S TIPS

Share your classroom problems with us! We ask teachers from all over to tell us how they deal.

How do I get parent support?

BY INES C. BAUTISTA

QUICK QUERY:

How can I get parents more involved in my students' studies and in school activities?

SOUND SOLUTIONS:

Teachers should try to do home visitation with at least three pupils a week. Talking with parents one-on-one is better than a PTA meeting, which focuses more on relaying the school's vision and activities as well as their child's studies. Home visitation is one effective way of building a personal relationship with parents. —*Ma. Luisa Abuel*

Encourage parents read to or with their kids. Nothing heavy, just the stuff their kids enjoy. Also tell your students' parents to encourage their kids to ask questions. They should take these seriously, even silly ones, and answer them honestly. Remind parents not to be afraid to say they don't know. —*Kara Atienza*

BRT: Build a Relationship of Trust with your parents. Start during your first homeroom PTA meeting. Present your plans for their children, set goals with them and have them commit to work with you. Set the best example. Be on time during PTA meetings,

give an updated report on the progress of their children. If there's a need for an individual interview with the parent, please do it privately. Don't put a parent in an embarrassing situation. —*Nida Orlina-Aquino*

It's up to you to get to know the parents. Here are some ways to do it:

- Get parents to participate in school activities by raising funds for their kid's class or for the school itself.
- Have sportsfests that involve faculty and parents. We have a major sports event in our school where everyone participates! —*Cherie Altea*

Go the extra mile to build rapport with them, especially because some parents believe that teachers are strict and unapproachable. If a child has been absent for a week or more, I talk to the parents to find out what the problem is. The PTA meeting at the start of the school year is also very important. At this meeting, we gain the support of the



You can talk to them when they come to pick up their child or hold meetings on a set topic. —*Amanda Lim*

Hold an orientation program for parents to encourage them to visit the school. Encourage them to visit even if their kid doesn't have a problem.

You can also work with the parents' association to give parent enrichment seminars especially on parent-child relationships and parenting in the 21st century. —*Pam Favila*

entire community. After this, we send reminders through their children during the school year. So far, our strategy is working. The community donated their labor to build flower boxes, and every month, a group of parents from the assigned grade level comes to clean and repair the school.

—*Melda Lacson*

The most successful event involving parents is our open house. During the event, the kids demonstrate the materials they've worked with in the classroom. Each kid has a demonstration that lasts only a few minutes. After this, the parents can talk to each other or to the teachers. We also send parents newsletters that the teachers write themselves. Parent education is very important.

DO YOU HAVE A SOUND SOLUTION TO THIS QUICK QUERY?

I teach Grade 4, but I have students who can barely read. How can I help them to catch up?

Send your reply to:

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