

LETTERS

'Hats Off' to Principal Denise Richtarik

Principals come and go, and when you get one as dedicated, nurturing, and professional as Denise Richtarik, it is hard to let her go! Before the end of the school year, Principal Richtarik came under scrutiny for doing her job when she didn't allow a student to wear a hat decorated with army men and guns because the hat was against the "no violence" policy as mandated by the Coventry School Department. Principal Richtarik was following the rules she agreed to uphold as Principal of Tiogue Elementary School. This situation was blown out of proportion, making Ms. Richtarik a target for numerous hate e-mails and nasty phone calls from across the country. This was very upsetting to staff and parents from Tiogue School, to see their dedicated principal retiring with such negative publicity. We feel it is necessary to let everyone know the "REAL" Principal Richtarik.

Denise Richtarik has dedicated 35 years to education, 13 of those years, as principal of Tiogue Elementary School. She has been an outstanding principal, who always gave 110 percent to everything she did, and everyone she came in contact with. She has touched many lives throughout her career, through her dedication to her staff, students, and families. She is an inspiration to us all! Her love of education and her confidence in her students and families are exceptional!

Principal Richtarik has given back to the community in numerous ways: Tomorrow Fund benefiting Hasbro Children's Hospital; Books are Wings; Adopt a Family for Christmas; clothing drives; Thanksgiving baskets collection; Pennies for Patients; Math-a-Thon for St. Jude's Children's Hospital; grade 3 adopted a soldier in Iraq; Hero Day for the custodian, Mr. Ed, who was honored for being in Vietnam; Red, White & Blue day to send supplies to The National Guard; she was also a finalist for Principal of the Year; she participated in Foundation of Excellent Schools where Tiogue School was said to have "excellence in teaching" from the University of Texas; and Tiogue School is a nationally recognized Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.

In closing, Tiogue School would not have accomplished all of this without the dedication of Principal Richtarik. She is a professional, caring individual who would never act inappropriately, especially in an unpatriotic way, as she was accused of doing when the hat incident surfaced. She did not deserve the negative publicity she received for following the rules of the Town of Coventry. Denise Richtarik is a dedicated member of this community and would never do anything against the military, as she has always supported the armed services. We wish her well on her retirement!

Killea and Poole families
Coventry