

HONORING INNOVATION IN TEACHING

2012-2013 Chadwick Educator of the Year

Tom Clauset



Congratulations to sixth-grade science teacher Tom Clauset, who was named the 2012-2013 Chadwick School Educator of the Year by the Rotary Club of Palos Verdes Peninsula. Clauset was honored in a special ceremony November 7, 2012, at the Palos Verdes Golf Club.

According to Village School Director Pam McComas, Clauset is a teacher whose work inspires students because of its inventive, hands-on, minds-on approach. With three decades of experience in education, he continues to grow and stretch as an educator so that he can draw out the best from his students.

“Tom ignites passion about science and learning,” McComas says. “He challenges his students to think hard, collaborate, and use technology wisely and well. The result is that science comes alive for them. It is so exciting to see.”

Indeed, Clauset is an avid supporter of science and technology education. He was the first teacher at Chadwick to use a new teaching method known

as “flipping,” wherein, rather than presenting course information in class, he films himself talking about an upcoming topic so that his students can watch and learn at home. They then come to school ready to discuss and act on the learning from the night before. He also encourages students to create “living” research projects known as inquiry circles by using online pin boards like Evernote and Pinterest (see page 20.)

“Tom is constantly working to find new and innovative ways for our sixth-grade students to learn and connect with course material,” says Headmaster Ted Hill. “His innovation has inspired not just our students, but his fellow faculty, as well.”

In one such example, Clauset created a dunk dunk in the classroom to help students learn about buoyancy and displacement. Students who volunteer get into the tank while their classmates measure how much water is displaced when they submerge themselves. The

now-annual tradition of the Float Your Boat Race is also a Clauset innovation, requiring students to invent, collaborate, test, and build a floatable device while applying all that they have learned about buoyancy in class. It’s just one more way he has worked to bring learning to life.

“When I learned that I had been chosen as the Chadwick Educator of the Year, I was both surprised and humbled,” Clauset says. “I love trying new activities and strategies with students, and especially incorporating technology into the science program. Chadwick provides a nurturing environment for students and for teachers alike. I have loved being at Chadwick and would like to thank the teachers and administrators who have encouraged and supported me along the way.”

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Clauset holds a Bachelor’s degree in English from the University of North Carolina and a Master’s degree in education from Bank Street College.