



Fontana STAR

Gorge Santiago

shares how he is inspired



Profile in Excellence: Gorge Santiago, Principal	
FUSD Schools Attended:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redwood Elementary Sequoia Junior High Fontana High School
Higher Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California State University, San Bernardino - B.A. in Business Administration National University - M.A. in Cross-cultural Education Azusa Pacific University - M.A. in School Administration
FUSD Career Experiences:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redwood Elementary - Teacher Juniper Elementary - Assistant Principal Oleander Elementary - Principal
Who were the FUSD staff that affected you most as a student?	<p><i>Jerry Dison, English Teacher at Fontana High School. He was the first teacher to challenge me, and basically not accept the work I was producing. He was the first teacher who mentored me, and taught me the importance of mentoring. Bill Freeman, was my Social Studies/Economics Teacher at Fontana High School. He was the first teacher to tell me I had great potential, but I was wasting it away because I was lazy, and he challenged me to step it up.</i></p>
What did you dream of growing-up to be as a child that would lead you to your work with FUSD?	<p><i>As a child, I wanted to be involved in Business. Like any kid growing up, I wanted to make a lot of money. However, because of the impact that teachers had in my life, I realized I wanted to impact the lives of future students after I made a lot of money. Well, I never made a lot of money, but I knew I could impact the lives of students and help them realize that education was the key to success, so I dreamt of teaching at Redwood Elementary. Little would I know that my first teaching job would be there.</i></p>
Since you've joined FUSD as staff, what experience(s) have you been most proud of?	<p><i>That was the day we had a Pep Rally to announce to staff and students that we were no longer in Program Improvement. On that day we awarded students who had scored Proficient or Advanced necklaces with their accomplishments, and it was rewarding to see how many students had improved academically. It was awesome!</i></p>
What keeps you up at night about your work for FUSD?	<p><i>I worry about the amount of students who are scoring below the Proficiency scale on standardized test. I know these students want a better future for themselves, yet they have so much they need to overcome. I'm always wondering what more I can do to help them overcome their challenges and help them be what they want to be.</i></p>

What do you think is the biggest misconception the public has about our work?	<i>I think too many people believe we are in the profession for long summer vacations. I don't think people realize the pressure we are under. Teaching isn't a job, it's a calling. The day it becomes a job, that is the day we stop inspiring children to dream and believe. People don't realize that they are what they are because someone educated them, and inspired them. I also believe that too many people think teachers became teachers because they couldn't be anything else, and I think that is wrong. Many teachers have the potential to become writers, lawyers, etc., but have decided that their joy is in touching the lives of students.</i>
What can the community do to strengthen public education?	<i>Become active at schools. Schools can't do it alone. Whether it's reading with a group of students, or donating time to help a teacher, it's all good. It's easy to play Monday morning quarterback, but it's hard when you're the quarterback.</i>
What inspires you to give your very best for the students of FUSD?	<i>Everyday I walk my campus, I see students who desire bigger and greater goals than I had. I realize that if I'm going to help these students reach their potential, it is through a solid education. Education is the great equalizer in our society, and it transcends all racial, economic and social issues in our society.</i>
What might staff or students be surprised to learn about you?	<i>I am a pretty silly guy. People picture me as being this serious, conservative person, but I like having a good time, and I like to make people laugh.</i>

If you know of a "Fontana Star," particularly one who was an FUSD alumnus, you can nominate him or her to be featured by emailing webmaster@fUSD.net. Please provide your name, the name of the individual being nominated, contact information for both of you and a brief description as to why you think the individual qualifies as a Fontana Star.