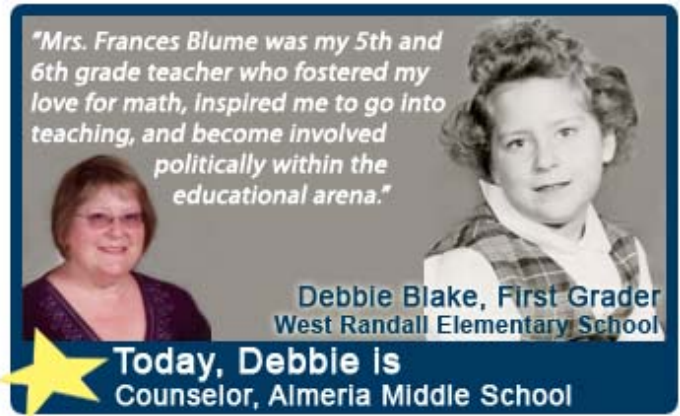




Fontana STAR

Debbie Simpson

shares how she is inspired



Profile in Excellence:	
FUSD Schools Attended:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Randall Elementary • Live Oak Elementary • Sequoia Junior High School • Fontana High School, Class of 1972
Higher Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cal State University San Bernardino – BA in Psychology, BA in Liberal Studies and Multiple Subject Teaching Credential • Azusa Pacific University – MA in Educational Administration and Administrative Services Credential • UC Riverside – Pupil Personnel Service Credential
FUSD Career Experiences:	I spent 7 years teaching at Randall-Pepper Elementary and 5 years at Oleander Elementary. I have been a counselor at Almeria Middle School since 1993.
Who were the FUSD staff that affected you most as a student?	<i>I had so many teachers throughout the years that had a significant influence on me. Mrs. Frances Blume was my 5th and 6th grade teacher who fostered my love for math, inspired me to go into teaching and become involved politically within the educational arena. As I began my teaching career, she and I would be colleagues at the same school and also become dear friends. From my junior high years, Mr. Paul Howe, Mrs. Pat Goetz, and Mr. Roger Jacobsen encouraged me to always set high goals. In high school, my favorites were: Mr. Esmael Velasquez, Mr. Jerry Dison, Mr. Bobby Rowell, Mr. Jim Dunn, and Mrs. Marva (Wiegman) Allman.</i>
What did you dream of growing-up to be as a child that would lead you to your work with FUSD?	<i>At the age of four, I wanted to be a hairdresser. Well, I also wanted to own the salon and teach others how to be a hairdresser! A few years later, the TV show Flipper was a hit and Sea World and Marineland became my favorite places to visit. So I wanted to teach/train dolphins. After several years of college and working with animals and behavior training, I finally decided teaching was my goal. I would follow in my older sister's footsteps and teach humans at the elementary level.</i>
Since you've joined FUSD as staff, what experience(s) have you been most proud of?	<i>I am very proud of the successes of my students. I enjoy seeing many of them as they are engaged in employment throughout Fontana and other communities. I am also proud of my active involvement as an advocate for teachers and educators for the past 25+ years in the Fontana Teachers Association and positions held at the state (CTA) and national (NEA) levels.</i>

<p>What keeps you up at night about your work for FUSD?</p>	<p><i>I am concerned every time I schedule a student into a classroom that already has met its class size limit. This is not fair to the student or the teacher. I also worry about the lack of motivation that many of our students have at such an early age.</i></p>
<p>What do you think is the biggest misconception the public has about our work?</p>	<p><i>That we can run the same quality programs at our schools with less and less resources. There has been a \$17 billion budget cut to education over the past two years. California is not at the top when it comes to funding public education. We currently stand at 43rd in per pupil spending and 47th when per pupil is adjusted for regional differences. In spite of difficult times, we can proudly proclaim many student successes. However, educating our youth is not an easy task!</i></p>
<p>What can the community do to strengthen public education?</p>	<p><i>The community needs to become aware and actively involved with the issues dealing with public education. Parents and other community members need to visit their neighborhood schools and see the fine jobs that are being done each and every day. All educators need to be the voice of public education and spread the news of the successes to family and friends. Communication and involvement are necessary.</i></p>
<p>What inspires you to give your very best for the students of FUSD?</p>	<p><i>I have been inspired by the fabulous teachers I had while a student in Fontana. My colleagues who are very dedicated in providing an exceptional education to all of our students remind me daily of why I am here and how important our job is. However, I think I am most inspired by the students. I see so many students trying to succeed while struggling with responsibilities and obstacles that may daunt most adults.</i></p>
<p>What might staff or students be surprised to learn about you?</p>	<p><i>I received a letter in the mail one day. I had taken an incomplete grade in a class and seven years had passed and this grade had now turned into an "F"! I had never earned an "F" before. I have a teddy bear collection (most bears are 6" and smaller). My husband and I also have an extensive shot glass collection from all our travels...the latest additions are from Australia and New Zealand.</i></p>

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.