



Janet Koehler-Brooks

shares how she is inspired



Profile in Excellence:

Janet Koehler-Brooks, Counselor

FUSD Schools Attended:

- South Tamarind Elementary School
- Oleander Elementary School
- Fontana Junior High School
- Fontana High School – Class of 1968

Higher Education:

- Pepperdine University – B.S., 1971
- Standard Secondary Teaching Credential
- Cal State University, San Bernardino – M.A. in Education, 1977
- Pupil Personnel Services Credential

FUSD Career Experiences:

1972 – My career began with teaching home economics at Fontana Junior High School. I was mentored in the counseling field by Bud Baldwin. He was a kind and encouraging teacher and counselor.
 1975-77 – While attending a conference in Hawaii, I met my future husband, Richard Brooks. He was an aerial photographer. We were married and I moved to Honolulu where I accepted my first counseling job at an elementary school on Oahu. It was great driving through a rainforest to work every day.
 1981 – Upon returning to FUSD, I taught the Opportunity Class at Alder Junior High School for a brief time. Then I was hired as a counselor at Fontana Junior High School. I spent a few years at Fojay as a student, teacher, and then a counselor.
 1996 – I transferred to Truman Middle School when it opened.

Who were the FUSD staff that affected you most as a student?

An individual teacher who truly inspired me was Mr. Cinque, an elementary teacher. He was very positive and encouraged students to do their best. Music made the difference in high school. I was fortunate to participate in band under the leadership of Mr. Eitelman. My father, Dr. Charles Koehler, made the biggest impact on me. Being raised by a teacher was a great experience. Every summer we took a two month trek (or what seemed like two months) across the United States. We were very blessed to share this time as a family. When I began my counseling career, I had the unique opportunity of working as a counselor at the same time that my dad was also a counselor. I was employed at Fontana Jr. High School and he was a counselor at Alder Jr. High.

What did you dream of growing-up to be as a child that would lead you to your work with FUSD?

Education was very important in our home. My grandmother was a teacher and read to me many evenings. I was blessed to be raised in a Christ-centered home by my wonderful parents, Charles and Rosemary Koehler. My mother was the quiet

	<i>strength that kept our family centered and my father was a teacher, and a counselor at Sequoia and Alder. Becoming an educator was an early interest. Over the years, countless former students would mention what a difference he made in their lives. Even though I loved teaching, I realized that there wasn't enough time to listen to individual students and knew that counseling was the direction I was headed.</i>
Since you've joined FUSD as staff, what experience(s) have you been most proud of?	<i>Community involvement and the impact that it has upon the school is powerful. For example, as a member of the Kiwanis Club of Fontana, I sponsor the Builders Club at Truman which began when the school opened. Boy Scouts is another wonderful group which provides so many experiences and opportunities to serve the community. My husband, Richard, has been a leader for many years. With the help of these groups, along with ASB, we've been able to continue a food basket program that began in our own home in 1981. I'm proud to be associated with the wonderful counselors of the FUSD. They provide essential guidance services to the students of Fontana.</i>
What keeps you up at night about your work for FUSD?	<i>The loss of a student is difficult. Recently, a former Truman student, Mark Schroeder, died in an auto accident. He graduated with honors from Carter High School and was in the Navy. Mark was 18. Students like Mark leave a legacy. His joy and love of life will continue through his family and friends.</i>
What do you think is the biggest misconception the public has about our work?	<i>Educating young people is an extremely challenging and rewarding profession. Everyone employed in the school makes a difference. Working with students requires tremendous energy, dedication, and patience.</i>
What can the community do to strengthen public education?	<i>All of us need to be involved in the community. Strengthening public education certainly requires involvement from the home, as well as support from the school. We all have the opportunity to volunteer our time in schools, churches, organizations, recreational activities, and in the community at large. Events, such as community clean-ups, Special Olympics, Relay For Life, Fontana Days, etc., allow us to contribute time and attention to the families of Fontana.</i>
What inspires you to give your very best for the students of FUSD?	<i>A career in the field of education can be incredibly rewarding. It's wonderful when a former student sees you out in the community and recalls a meaningful experience and the impact you had upon their life and future endeavors. To hear of their accomplishments is the best gift in education.</i>
What might staff or students be surprised to learn about you?	<i>I was born in Saginaw, Michigan. During college, I studied in Heidelberg, Germany. After my father passed away in December of 2002, I was appointed to fill his position as Fontana City Treasurer. In 2006, I ran for the office and was elected City Treasurer and currently serve in this capacity. In 2007, I was a recipient of the 63rd District Women of Distinction Award and am a trained Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) member. I stay very busy with family (my husband, Richard, and sons, Evan and Matthew), community activities, and church, as well as caring for my special needs sister, Nancy.</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.