



CITY OF
TUCSON

WARD 2 COUNCIL OFFICE

CAROL W. WEST
COUNCILMEMBER

June 29, 2007

To Whom it may Concern:

I am enthusiastically writing this letter in behalf of Art DeFilippo, school principal extraordinaire, at Davidson School. I have worked with Art for the last five years on various projects at the school. He has also been more than willing to allow nearby Ward 2 neighborhoods to use the school cafeteria for their meetings.

I was impressed that during the pre-construction meetings for the new Davidson School, Art involved his staff in the details. This resulted in a school with sustainable features-a first for TUSD-that also met the needs of the staff and students. The Governor has requested the opportunity to visit this unique "green" LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified building and is expected to visit in the fall. She will also be able to visit the solar energy project which produces 10% of the school's energy needs.

Prior to Art's arrival, Davidson School was labeled as "under performing". Because he has provided the students with learning activities that teach and inspire, the school is now cited as "performing". Davidson has won awards for academic achievement, and Opening Minds Through the Arts is an integral part of the curriculum. The School has won an excellent school award. A program introduced to promote reading-Ride to Read-includes giving away two bicycles a week to students that have done a certain amount of reading.

Art works with the parents who are primarily low socioeconomic. Yet parental involvement at the school is very high. He produces the school newsletter both in Spanish and in English. He jumps on problems and solves them immediately. He will walk children home if needed and also is at the bus stop to greet the children arriving at school. This often gives Art an extra opportunity to visit with the parents about their concerns too.

This work was noticed by State School Superintendent Tom Horne, who recognized Davidson School for having the most volunteers (90) of all of the public schools in Arizona.

An adept grant writer, Art presently has four grants in play at Davidson including a Pima County Neighborhood Reinvestment Grant to assist with an ADA playground, exercise stations, and a garden park. The City grant also is designated for the Park, which will be used by the students and the neighborhood.

Art DiFilippo is an outstanding school administrator-the kind that children will remember all of their lives because of the many wonderful experiences these students have had under his care and teaching. He is an exemplary role model for students and staff alike. I believe that Art will continue to provide exceptional leadership, no matter where he is assigned.

Sincerely,

Carol W. West
Council Member - Ward 2