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May 13th, 2015 · by Mesa Independent staff report · 0 Comments



Kathleen Perales

Meet Your Neighbor is a feature of the Independent that introduces readers to a community member. To receive a profile form or to nominate a neighbor, send an e-mail to emesanews@newszap.com. Kathleen Perales works at Mesa Community College Red Mountain Campus.

Name: Kathleen Perales
 School: Mesa Community College
 How long I have worked in education: 21 years
 Why I chose to work for this school: Community colleges are one of America's best inventions – they create opportunities for anyone who is interested in pursuing education beyond high school and with a full focus on their academic potential – and MCC does this best by providing a host of programs and services to accommodate any student needs.
 What I like most about what I do: I have the flexibility and support to create programs and services that truly respond to the community's needs for college access and attainment.
 Where I came from: A native Arizonian – born and raised in Tucson – and have lived and worked in Phoenix for 16 years.
 What degree(s) I hold and from what institution: I'm an Arizona Wildcat, with a BA in communication and marketing, masters degree from NAU in organizational leadership with emphasis on the community college.
 If I had picked a different occupation, it might have been: I'm not sure I would choose something different.
 My vision for the school: MCC becomes an oasis of educational opportunities for all community members.
 My top priority for the school this upcoming year: Create seamless pathways to college among all the areas that I oversee from early college opportunity to family literacy programs and services.
 Favorite community cause & why: Foster youth. Arizona has over 14,000 children in foster care, 742 of which are aging out of the system without resources, guidance, family and support. Developing educational pathways and career exploration opportunities will be integral to their success.
 My interests and hobbies: One of my outside interests is developing programs that empower young girls via strong and healthy friendships, leadership and volunteerism. My hope is to expose young girls to phenomenal women who have shown resiliency, independence and success.
 The best and/or worst time in my life: Best part of my life is now – I'm very lucky to have an amazing husband,

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children and family. I have a roof over my head, the ability to pay my bills, save for the future and work at a job that I love. Life is good. Worst time – loss of my parents (separately). Nothing can replace them.

The trait(s) I admire in others: Kindness. More people should have this. Courage and empathy.

People who inspired me (and how): My mom, for positively impacting thousands of youth in Tucson to achieve their educational goals and being an incredible mother and wife. Anyone who is true to themselves – even when they take a hit.

My guiding philosophy: Be true to myself.

How I think students can achieve their potential: Let go of the past and realize that everyone has the ability to learn and do well academically. Recognize that learning itself is unique to each person. There are different paths to get to the same place. The important thing is that you arrive.

My advice to today's youth: Be true to yourself, work hard and have value and respect yourself. Understand your self worth and never let anyone take that away from you. It's the building blocks for your future success, regardless of what you choose to do.

One thing I want students to know about me: My first college course was developmental education math and English. Don't let my current role fool you into thinking that my journey was easy. Not much was expected of me (outside of my immediate family) and I had to make a conscious decision to take over the trajectory of my life and not leave it in the hands of others.

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