Written by
DEBORAH DEASY

Richland Elementary's Farmer selected state substitute teacher of year

Substitute teacher Eric Farmer suspected a surprise when coworkers insisted that he attend a teachers' luncheon on May 9 — Farmer's birthday — at Richland Elementary School. "I thought they were going to sing "Happy Birthday to me," said Farmer, 24, of Youngwood, Westmoreland County. Instead, Farmer got $100 as the Kelly Educational Staffing® Substitute Teacher of the Year for Pennsylvania.

Farmer, a Knoch High School graduate, is the son of William Farmer of Saxonburg and Kimberly Strobel of Penn Township, Butler County.

Farmer also is a 2012 graduate of Seton Hill University with a bachelor's degree in psychology, plus, teaching certifications in special education, elementary education and middle school math. "I just knew that I liked working with kids," said Farmer, who went to Seton Hill University on a partial football scholarship.

Farmer also met his wife—Victoria Lombardo—at Seton Hill University, where she is pursuing a master's degree with plans to become a physician's assistant. They exchanged vows in December and now lead a youth ministry at the Victorious Life Church in Greensburg.

During the last 12 months, Farmer filled in for elementary through high school teachers in Pine-Richland School District.

"I've subbed at every school in the district, and the kids all over the district are just wonderful," Farmer said. "Every time I tried something new, I loved it. I like going into new environments and meeting new kids."

Farmer currently is filling in for Stacey Carulli, a special education teacher at Richland Elementary School, who is on maternity leave.

"Mr. Farmer handles himself professionally, is flexible, adjusts to the needs of our building, and has taken the time to get to know students," said Mary Catherine Reljac, principal at Eden Hall Elementary School in Richland. Reljac nominated Farmer for his recent state award.

"This award is Kelly Educational Staffing's highest employee honor," said Karen Houseman, branch manager for the Pittsburgh office of Kelly Educational Staffing, a specialty business of staffing agency Kelly Services®.

"Nominations are based on performance, feedback, and recommendations from permanent teachers and school administrators at the schools where the substitute teachers have been assigned," Houseman said.

Kelly Educational Staffing honored Farmer for his "outstanding performance and exemplary service" to Plum Borough and Pine-Richland School Districts, according to Houseman. "Additionally, Mr. Farmer worked 120 days during the school year, filling 99 assignments, 17 of which were same-day requests," Houseman said.

Houseman said Kelly Educational Staffing employs nearly 1,500 substitute teachers in 20 Pennsylvania school districts.

Farmer applied to work for Kelly Educational Staffing within weeks of his college graduation and quickly got assignments. He recommends the firm to any college graduate looking for a teaching job. "They're really organized," Farmer said. "They provide tons of incentives."

About Kelly Educational Staffing

Kelly Educational Staffing (KES®) is a specialty business of Kelly Services, Inc, a leader in workforce solutions and the first staffing provider to develop a comprehensive education staffing solution. Since 1997, KES has been dedicated to helping K–12 public, private, and charter schools around the country operate at peak capacity through gains in operational efficiency and cost savings opportunities. KES partners with 3,000+ public, private, and charter schools across 35 states and has a national placement rate greater than 98 percent.

*Visit **www.kellyeducationalstaffing.com** for more information.*

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