

Sunday, May 29, 2016 » MORE AT [FACEBOOK.COM/MORNINGJOURNAL](https://www.facebook.com/morningjournal) AND [TWITTER](https://twitter.com/morningjournal). [morningjournal.](https://www.morningjournal.com)

AMHERST

Living the dream

Teacher follows students on educational journey

By **Kelsey Leyva**
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Seeing her students succeed is something Kaye Long, intervention specialist at Josiah Harris Elementary School in Amherst, described as one of the best feelings in the world.

"I love my job," she said. "I feel so blessed to come to work every day."

Long, of Lorain, has been teaching for five years and three of those years have been spent in Amherst. Ever since she was a young girl, Long knew she wanted to follow in her mom and grandmother's footsteps and become a teacher.

"My dream job has always been to have my own classroom, so being in this unit has just been fabulous," she said. "This is exactly the job I envisioned for myself."

Long has seven children in her classroom who are third- through fifth-grade students with varying educational needs. Students in her class have the opportunity to stay with her for up to three years depending on what grade they're in when they join, which Long said is beneficial.

"They get comfortable

DREAM » PAGE 3



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Ten-year-old Jordyn looks on as Harris Elementary School intervention specialist Kaye Long helps fourth-grader Josh, 10, water his Mother's Day planter on May 6.

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Far West Center receives Ryan White grant

Far West Center has received a Ryan White grant to provide outpatient mental health services for eligible persons with HIV/AIDS living in Lorain or Cuyahoga counties.

The psychological and emotional impact of HIV/AIDS can be overwhelming. Often, the diagnosis itself triggers a host of mental health problems that worsen symptoms of the illness itself.

Far West Center is an experienced provider of specialized mental health services, including the care of persons living with HIV/

AIDS. Outpatient services include evaluation, counseling, psychiatric care, medication, case management, and recovery support sessions.

Through both locations in Amherst and Westlake, Far West Center is able to provide these services under one roof.

Individuals with HIV/AIDS in need of the center's services may self-refer, or be referred by health care providers from local hospitals, clinics, or the community.

According to Kelly Dylag, President/CEO of Far West Center, "Our community is

fortunate to have such capable health care partners as the Infectious Disease Clinic at Mercy Regional Medical Center and the Elyria City Health District, partnering with us to serve our Lorain County HIV/AIDS patients."

All three organizations receive grant funding for caring for HIV/AIDS patients through the Ryan White grant administered by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health.

For more information, call 440.835.6212, ext. 230 or email intake@farwest-center.com.

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Dream

FROM PAGE 1

with me as their teacher so they're able to open up more and express themselves more," she said. "I really get to be with them on their educational journey. I get to see their growth from year to year and see the progress that they've made."

Lessons are usually done in a small group setting of two to three students, but Long said she runs whole group lessons as well. If she's covering a new topic and someone needs individualized attention, Long is able to provide that. She said her room is based off of the Unique Learning Curriculum, so everyone learns the same topic but each child's lesson or assignment looks slightly different.

Long said she has a lot of visual and auditory learners in her room, which is why she incorporates traditional academics as well as technology and activities such as Veggie U in her classroom.

Long said Veggie U is a program where her students grow plants that are later donated to the school garden. Every child also has an iPad and Long said the educational apps really bring learning to life for her students.

"We definitely have a diverse group of learners in my room and so I'm always trying to pull different methods and use different methods of teaching to really include all of them and help them all grow with their academics," she said. "I try to make it as fun and engaging as I can, but my students also know that I have very high expectations for them and they work to achieve those expectations."

She described her students as hard workers who love to learn.

"When they achieve a goal that they've been working for it's a huge celebration for that child and rightfully so, but those are the

Long said she has a lot of visual and auditory learners in her room, which is why she incorporates traditional academics as well as technology and activities such as Veggie U in her classroom.

moments I live for," Long said. "Helping a child succeed, helping a child have that confidence, that's why I do what I do."

But Long said she wouldn't be able to develop the relationships she does with her students if it weren't for the two women who serve as the classroom support staff.

Patty Leuszler has been assisting Long for three years and Melissa Haslage has been in the classroom for two years.

"They are amazing," Long said. "I could not do my job without them. They go above and beyond every day to help me and they would do absolutely anything for our students, so they are huge in my classroom."

Leuszler said she loves her job and thinks the world of Long.

"She's so kind-hearted and loving," Leuszler said of Long. "You need that to do this job."

In addition to building bonds with her students, Long said she feels her job is to support their families as well. She admitted that there are challenges at times, but said that the rewards outweigh those challenges.

"Being a teacher is so fulfilling," she said. "I not only get the opportunity to teach my students new things, but I learn something new from my students every day. My



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Third-grader Fernando, 9, fills his planter with soil with the help of Harris Elementary School teacher Kaye Long, May 6.

students really help make me a better person."

On top of running her own classroom, Long is also one of two coordinators for the Special Olympics Program. Long said this is her second year working with the program and described it as a big family.

"I love it because I get to work with some of my future students, my current students, my former students and then I get to meet students who I haven't had the privilege of working with which is wonderful," she said.

The student athletes participate in sports including soccer, swimming, bowling, basketball, softball and track.

Long said each sport is practiced for six weeks at a time with one practice a week. Her responsibilities include getting purchase orders set up with vendors, shopping for different supplies and planning different events and fundraisers for the nonprofit.



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Third-grader Clark, 10, and Harris Elementary School teacher Kaye Long admire Clark's finished planter the pair made for Mother's Day, May 6.

Long said the program is a great social activity for the student athletes and a great way parents to meet other parents and learn of other activities.

"It's a lot of fun," she said.

"I'm very lucky to be a part of the program. Our athletes all get along and they have a special friendship and bond together. It's a wonderful program."

With her profession and

her passion aligned, Long said she couldn't imagine herself doing anything else.

"Not many people know exactly what they want to do and I lucked out," she said.

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