



Tanya Vargas

Spanish Teacher

Markham Woods Middle School

Lake Mary, FL

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Statement:

I believe that learning a second language opens students to see the world from a different point of view and learning different culture' languages increase global awareness. The study of foreign languages teaches and encourages respect for other people from other backgrounds and cultures. Understanding and valuing other languages is essential to becoming more globally aware and comfortable in other cultures. It is beneficial for our students who might find themselves in close contact with cultures different from their own for work, family, or leisure travel. Therefore, learning a target language fosters an understanding of the interrelation of languages and human nature. Providing the opportunity to expand one's view of the world. Allowing our students to deal with another culture enables them to gain a more profound understanding of their own culture. We as foreign language teachers strive to develop and increase deeper global understanding that allows them to both overcome cross-cultural differences and develop empathy and trust for those from other cultures.

Teaching a foreign language is to have a passion for the cultures which speak the target language, and to expose our students to the new cultures. I choose to be a foreign language teacher because I want to share my love for the language and its culture with a new generation of students. As a Spanish teacher, I do more than teaching vocabulary and grammar to my students. I introduce them to the culture and history of the countries in which the language is spoken to present my students to a whole new world. Permitting me to build a sense of empathy and cross-cultural competency in my students. As they begin to understand and grow in curiosity toward a new group of people from diverse cultures. In addition, promoting and establishing a Sociedad Hispánica de Amistad in my school has provided our foreign language students the chance to become global citizens and explore Spanish as a language, culture, and community. Our SHA members at Markham Woods have the opportunity to participate in service-learning projects to promote ambassadorship, service to school and service to community. Our Don Quijote Chapter has received the SHA Chapter of the Year Award in 2015 and in 2020 from AATSP. I love teaching Spanish and the Hispanic Culture, driven with so much passion and enthusiasm!

Biography:

Tanya was born in Cuenca, Ecuador. When she was sixteen years old, she went to Kapuskasing, Ontario in Canada to learn English as an exchange student. After graduating she moved to New York City where she lived for twelve years and continued her education. Before finally settling in Orlando, Florida with her family. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish with a minor in Secondary Education & Early Childhood from Queens College of the City University of New York. She has a Master of Education in Educational Leadership from Stetson University, and a certification in Spanish K-12 & ESOL endorsement. Tanya has been a public-school teacher for the past twenty-two years. She has taught high school and middle school Spanish in New York, Brevard County, Orange County and Seminole County in Florida. She is currently a teacher at Markham Woods Middle School, where she has 15 years of experience in teaching Beginning Spanish and Spanish 1 to 170 + students a year in 7th through 8th grade. Every year the SHA members from Markham Woods have participated on the SCPS World Languages Festival and have won first place for Middle Schools at the district level in 2015, 2018 & 2022. She has also encouraged her students to participate on the NSE and AATSP Poster Contest. Tanya has promoted the passion for learning the Spanish language and the Hispanic culture. She uses a variety of learning strategies to increase engagement, motivation, and cooperative learning. Furthermore, she has contributed to the design and development of curriculum, assessment, and teaching material for the school district. As the SHA adviser at her school, she encourages and motivates her students to take an active role in their community as well. Granting them the opportunity to become global citizens and increasing global awareness. She has organized service-learning projects for her Sociedad Hispánica de Amistad school chapter to promote ambassadorship, service to community and school.

Tanya is married and has four children. She likes to write, walk, sing, dance, and travel. She has attended to several language and culture courses in Spain and Puerto Rico.

Professional Honors/Recognition

- Seminole County Schools World Languages Outstanding Teacher of the Year in 2014
- Florida Foreign Language Association Most Valuable Teacher in 2015 & 2016
- AATSP “SHA” Chapter of the Year in 2015 & 2019
- AATSP “SHA” Chapter of the Year in 2015 & 2020
- FFLA Regional Director in 2017
- FFLA Most Valuable Teacher in 2018
- FAATSP Spanish “TOY” in 2018
- Florida State Spanish Conference- Judge in 2019 & 2022
- FAATSP President in 2020
- FFLA Board Member in 2021
- AATSP SHA Committee in 2022

