

## Teacher welcomes students to first day of Continuous Learning

### Submitted by Kansas State Department of Education

Teachers across Kansas welcomed their students to Continuous Learning on Monday, March 30, through a variety of creative ways. An Olathe Unified School District 233 second-grade teacher went above and beyond by making signs and placing them in each of her students' yards.

Many friends and coworkers of Angie Stroup focused on the fact that they wouldn't be able to see or teach their students face to face.

"In my mind, I was like, 'I'm not done. I'm still going to be their teacher, no matter what,'" Stroup said.

Earlier in the school year, Stroup had heard an instructional coach stress the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships. The idea of creating signs for students to welcome them back to school came up in discussion.

So, Stroup took the idea and decided to use it when the COVID-19 pandemic closed school buildings. She and her 22-year-old daughter, Carly, went to work on creating signs for Stroup's 23 students.

The colorful signs had messages telling students how proud Stroup is of them. Stroup also used the words "awesome" and "terrific" to describe her students.

"It took us about four days," Stroup said of creating the signs.

Her husband mapped out where students lived, and they delivered the signs late Sunday night. Stroup wanted her students to be able to wake up on the first day of Continuous Learning and see her special messages. But even before she made it home from the special deliveries, parents were messaging her and thanking her for what she had done.

Carl E. Slicker Jr. wrote to the Kansas State Department of Education through its Facebook page

and expressed his thanks for Stroup, who teaches at Meadow Lane Elementary School.

"This morning I opened up Facebook and saw the most amazing thing I've seen an educator do in a long time. ... I'm a retired Sergeant First Class from the United States Army, and that act of love, loyalty and compassion was an overwhelming heartfelt moment as we go through all of this in life right now," Slicker wrote. "To see a teacher take what had to be hours of her time and her family's time to ensure that her students felt that level of love and compassion is beyond approach. Mrs. Stroup's actions reflect greatly on not only her, the school district she works for, and the state of Kansas, but on educators throughout the world. Sometimes, it's the simplest of things that make our children feel that sense of desire to achieve, and Mrs. Stroup is definitely doing this."

Stroup has been teaching for 21 years - 14 years in the Olathe district. This is her first year at Meadow Lane.

Teaching runs in her family. Her daughter, Carly, recently accepted a position teaching second grade in Pittsburg. She was student teaching there and recently returned to Pittsburg to help teachers implement their Continuous Learning plan.

Although she's not in the classroom, Stroup is still teaching her students about "filling buckets" and being kind.

"You get your bucket filled by filling other's buckets," she said. "Now that I've done this, I have to figure out what else I can do. Building relationships in a classroom is so important, but it rises to the utmost important in times of uncertainty. I just wanted my students to know that I am proud of them and that I love them."