Emily Rueger

**Personal Philosophy of Education**

My educational philosophy has three major tenants – all people matter, the best way to strengthen the community is to support the family, the purpose of education is building capacity and enriching lives. While it is impossible to fully capture any personal philosophy succinctly, the most important parts of my philosophy are wrapped up in these three tenants. It is due to my belief in these three principles that I am passionate about the field of special education and desire to always be increasing my abilities as a professional.

**People Matter**

All people matter. All individuals, regardless of age ability or who they are, have value. I believe this gives us ample justification not just for education, but special education as well. Because all individuals have worth, I believe all individuals should be respected and treated like they have worth. Providing an accessible opportunity for education is one important way of treating someone with value and respect. It is my goal to help provide as many opportunities for all people as I can.

When I think of the innate value of every individual, I remember a quote from one of my favorite childhood books, *Horton Hears a Who*. “A person’s a person, no matter how small.” I heard this as a small child and carry it with me to this day. It is a powerful concept that transforms the way individuals with disabilities from all backgrounds are to be viewed and treated.

When I was a child I knew I was cared about. Every child should have that same assurance, because every child matters. As an educator, I want others to see in me how to live in this world in a way that is respectful to the value of all. It is my goal to have my demeanor show recognition of the value of every child, “no matter how small.”

**Strengthening Community through Supporting Families**

I feel family is important. Parents matter. Professionalism, true empathy and respect for people from every background is essential. "Be kind, everyone carries a heavy load" is an African proverb that has spoken to me often. This proverb summarizes the way I believe I should treat everyone. I hold myself to this standard in all my partnerships with families.

I believe that in supporting families a positive impact is made on children and our community as a whole. Families are the building blocks of society and we need for them to be strong. Helping families is helping communities and helping the world.

**Building Capacity and Enriching Lives**

The purpose of special education, and all education, is to build capacity and enrich lives. My job, as a special educator, is to facilitate the participation of everyone so all can benefit from education and the community.

As a special educator, I value the importance of respecting different intelligences and using multiple instructional methods. My goal is to build independence and help children participate within their family, community or school. My job is to shape foundational skills and facilitate continued development in order to enrich the lives of children and their families. It is my joy to help a child and family better thrive in life, now and in the future.

I strive to always build efficacy in children and their families. Enabling others, to succeed is and always will be the most satisfying thing I could ever do. When I help others to be their best is when I am at my best.

**Commitment**

I feel it is my ethical duty to maintain the ideals of my personal educational philosophy – people matter, strengthening community through supporting families, and building capacity and enriching lives. In each of these tenants is a promise. As a special educator, and as a person, I am committed to demonstrating the belief that people matter though my words and actions every day. Working with families and supporting them is a responsibility I hold as a professional who is seeking to strengthen communities. Special education holds in it the promise of building the capacity of all individuals and enriching lives. I do not take these responsibilities lightly. They are my commitment as a special education professional.