

Meet Camille's Teacher of the Month: Ben Cross

Each month, Camille's Sidewalk Café recognizes one local teacher within the Gallup area for his or her determination to help students go above and beyond. Prospective teachers are nominated by students who feel they deserve to be recognized.

This month's honor went to Ben Cross, a band teacher at John F. Kennedy Middle School.

Cross is originally from Amarillo, Texas. He graduated from Amarillo College and West Texas A&M with degrees in music and music education. This is his second year teaching music.

Cross said he wanted to move to New Mexico after he presented at the 2020 Southwest Popular/American Culture Association Conference in Albuquerque. He and a couple of the other panelists talked about moving to New Mexico, and he was the first do it. He decided to move to Gallup to get away from the "hustle and bustle" of Albuquerque.

When asked why he wanted to become a music teacher, Cross said music had always been a part of his life.

“I grew up with music. Texas has a very high importance that they put on music,” Cross explained. “I’ve always been involved in music.”

Cross said his favorite part about teaching music is the moment when a student gets a new piece of music.

“They are reading something they’ve never read before, and they’re getting it. It’s special,” he said.

Cross is still fairly new to teaching himself, but he shared some advice for new teachers.

“I think to new teachers I would just say it’s going to take an adjustment,” Cross said. “The things that they teach you at university are not necessarily the best pieces of advice. You have to roll with the punches, go with the flow, and just do your best.”

Cross was presented with the award Jan. 26. He said he was very surprised he was recognized.

“It’s a very nice honor to know that my students think so highly of me,” Cross said.

Interested in nominating your favorite teacher for Teacher of the Month? Contact Camille’s Sidewalk Cafe at (505)722-5017 or stop by 306 S. Second St. in Gallup.

By Molly Ann Howell
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