

THE BEST OF WILLIAMSBURG

Principal

Providence Classical's Susan Oweis tries to be fair, firm, friendly, flexible

By Susan Robertson

JAMES CITY — Susan Oweis' motto is "Learn every day and rule with love."

That's why she feels like she was voted Best Principal in the annual Gazette polling. She was surprised to receive the honor.

"Being an administrator is such a tough job," said Oweis, who is head of school at Providence Classical School, "that honestly anyone who does it deserves this kind of recognition."

She began her career in education 21 years ago as a seventh-grade math and history teacher at James Blair Middle School and later moved to Toano Middle School. In 2003 she became assistant principal at Queens Lake Middle School. She took over Providence Classical in 2006.

Throughout her career, she said she has tried to learn everything she can from the people around her.

"I learn something new from my students every day," she said.

The teachers and administrators she has worked with through the years have taught her inside and out-

side the classroom.

One piece of advice that has stuck with her came from Lucia Sebastian, York Schools chief academic officer. She once interviewed Sebastian to find out what made her such a well-liked administrator, and Sebastian told her she believed it was because she was "fair, firm, friendly and flexible."

Oweis said that made sense to her and she's tried to apply that to her own work. She also believes in demonstrating love over an iron fist, which stems from the passage "love never fails" in I Corinthians.

"No matter what happens," she said. "I tell my staff to love the families, to just love them."

She has found that if the families know that she and the staff care, that even the worst of situations can be taken care of without animosity. She strives for that with the students, families

and staff.

"Having been a teacher," she said, "I want to be the principal whom I would want to work for."

Kim Hammond, principal at Bruton High, came in second and Chuck Wagner, Jamestown High, received third.



Susan Robertson

Principal Susan Oweis is surrounded by some of her students.

CIVIC

Annual event/festival

An Occasion for the Arts
Grand Illumination
Greek Festival

Best principal

Susan Oweis, Providence
Kim Hammond, Bruton High
Chuck Wagner, Jamestown

Concert of the year

Williamsburg Symphonia
Community Chapel Christmas
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Kyle Cowles

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