



MEET



Intervention Specialist

Julie Milkie

What has been your favorite things about working with Westlake City Schools?

I met my husband! Also, the people I work with and the students as well. The kids are why you stay teaching and what's so special about Westlake is you really stay connected with the students and get to know them a little bit better.

What sort of challenges did COVID present in how you are able to meet the needs of students?

Going online made it really difficult to meet their intervention needs because you're not necessarily as one-on-one as you would be in person. This year, with students being back now and having my own classroom to work in, it's made it a little easier. But, trying to meet their needs and get them ready for high school during a pandemic has been hard. It's been an emotional transition for these kids. Even now, while it's nice to be back, they're still not allowed to visit much so we're missing some of the familiarity for the students.

Have you found that any of your adjustments you've had to undertake are things you'll continue doing?

I'm better with technology! I was able to find a lot of really great resources that I may not have needed nor looked for earlier. But now I have these at my disposal for as long as I teach.

What are some of your favorite places you've visited?

Kenya and Galapagos are two of my favorites.

How has Special Education changed since you began your career?

The kids are more accepted now, and they're treated as equal students. I think co-teaching and having the students in the classroom has helped make them feel better about what they need, and they don't feel so isolated from their peers.

What sort of activities do you enjoy in your free time?

I co-founded an education non-profit called "The Sprout Experience" (thesproutexperience.org). We run classes, camps and travel programs for students all over the world – Kenya, Trinidad & Tobago, Galapagos Islands, Thailand – and we focus on conservation and cultural immersion. It's been great to be able to see Westlake students also sign up and get to meet students from all over.

I also like to hike, kayak and scuba dive and generally be outdoors.

Who is someone who has had a positive impact on you?

Bernadette Plair (Director for the Centre for the Rescue of Endangered Species of Trinidad & Tobago). She's a scientist known all over the world, and she became a scientist when it was primarily a man's world. She's from Trinidad and she came to the US on a scholarship and just went out and did it. She's brilliant – the only woman to breed Indonesian Rhinos – and to talk to women who have broken into fields like that is really inspiring. And now, when we do conservation efforts, most of the people leading the research are women, which has been so great.