

## Dedicated to Sanford children

### Help us name the Deb Smith Classroom at Carl J. Lamb School

The best way to teach kindergartners about the world around them? According to longtime kindergarten teacher Deb Smith, hands-on learning engages young learners most effectively while teaching them their ABCs.

"I like the excitement children this age have when they come to school," said Ms. Smith, who has taught all ages at Carl J. Lamb School for 35 years. She will retire this year after 42 years in Sanford schools.

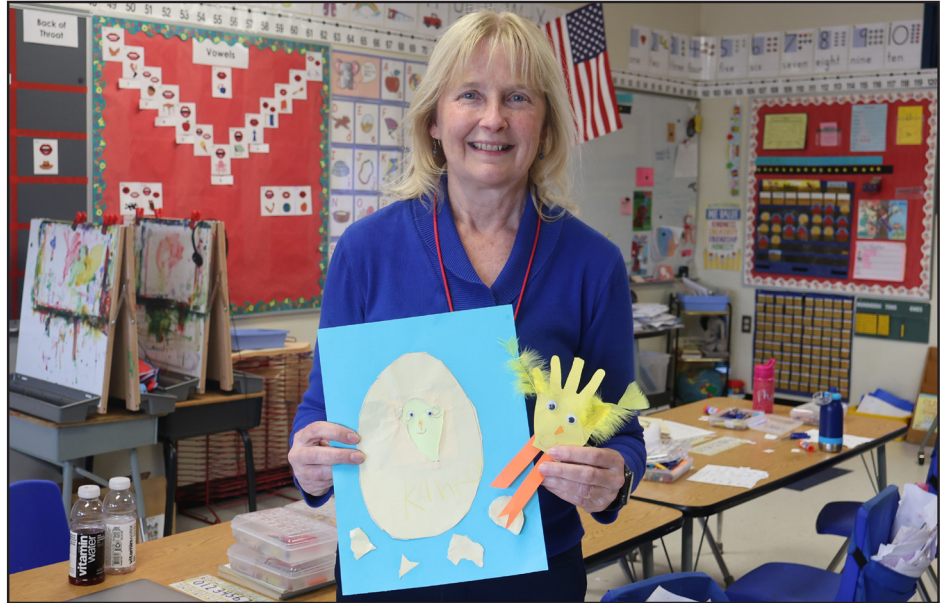
"She's been here long enough to teach children whose parents were once her students, creating lasting connections with families that make her truly special," said CJL School Principal Sherri Baron. "As much as it breaks our hearts to see Ms. Smith retire, we're so proud of the incredible legacy she's built and hope she'll visit often for PTA events, because that red room in kindergarten will always belong to our beloved Ms. Smith, who touched the lives of hundreds of children and inspired all of us with her warmth, creativity, and endless love."

Ms. Smith is well-known for her annual unit on monarch butterflies, punctuated by their colorful release, but she is perhaps best known and proud of chicken hatching unit taught every spring.

For more than 20 years she has brought a dozen eggs to school and incubates them in the office window for all to see. Children in her classroom learn all about the hatching process over the course of three weeks, and after 21 days their learning comes to life. And all of the kids in grades K-4 end up part of the literal hands-on life lesson.

"Ms. Smith is a glowing example of a teacher who goes above and beyond for not only her students, but the whole school," said Lydia Lehoux, Co-PTA president who has worked with Deb over the course of seven years.

Children, parents, colleagues and friends know Deb for loyally attending every Parent-Teacher Association meeting, always with



Ms. Smith's kindergarten unit on the chicken life cycle has become one of the children's much-anticipated favorite lessons, she says in large part because it is so hands-on. Every year Ms. Smith procures eggs to incubate under a heat lamp in the school office window so children can watch the eggs hatch into chickens over the 21-day period. Ms. Smith will retire in June 2025 after teaching at the Carl J. Lamb School for 35 years, 42 in total across most Sanford schools.

#### HOW TO HELP

To make a tax-deductible donation in Mrs. Smith's honor, visit [www.sanordschoolslegacyfoundation.com/give](http://www.sanordschoolslegacyfoundation.com/give) for donations under \$500. Donations above \$500 may be sent via check to the foundation at 917 Main St., Suite 200, Sanford, ME 04073. With a \$1,000 goal, the Legacy will name the classroom in honor of Deb, and use all funds to buy recess toys for CJ Lamb students.

her famous candy basket to share. She also made many contributions behind the scenes.

"What makes us love her even more are all the wonderful things she did when she thought no one was looking—those beautiful flowers by our school sign, homemade cookies for sick colleagues, and countless other acts of kindness that showed her generous heart," said Baron.

To recognize Ms. Smith's exemplary career, the Sanford Schools Legacy Foundation is collecting donations to fund naming rights to Deb's kindergarten classroom in her honor.

"She constantly goes above and beyond for her children," said Lehoux, also the president of the nonprofit Legacy Foundation. "She's had a dynamic career that's always been in Sanford. I don't think

there's a more deserving woman."

Deb started at CJ Lamb School when the school opened in 1990 and was a founding PTA member; her colleagues named Ms. Smith the inaugural "Outstanding Staff Person" in 2018. Starting as a substitute teacher, Deb has taught in every Sanford School, except the high school. She taught English/Language Arts at the middle school, as well as sewing. She's also been an enthusiastic advocate for field trips, particularly to the Children's Museum in Dover, and is a leading force behind the annual Chewonki guest visits to the school.

Added Baron: "We'll never forget her dressing up as a pilgrim with Mrs. Sylvestre to serve Thanksgiving dinner while teaching table manners and gratitude, organizing Chewonki or those magical Storybook Character and Memorial Day parades."

Deb has taught in many classrooms through the years, but the named classroom will be her favorite classroom by the door, currently Mrs. Marley's room, where she could see everyone coming and going.

All donations to the Legacy Foundation will be returned to CJL kids in the form of play equipment, such as balls and chalk to enjoy at recess.

"I really have enjoyed my time with all of the kids," said Deb, who doesn't have any children by birth. "These are my kids."