

# Fetty: 'I love this school; we're a family here'

by Darlene J. Swiger  
STAFF WRITER

Rachelle Fetty thought she wanted to be a nurse after graduating from high school, but she soon learned the medical path was not for her.

She thought about her likes and decided she enjoyed baby-sitting and loved kids — so teaching was an easy decision. That was 36 years ago. She has been teaching pre-school at Heritage Christian School for the past eight years.

After graduating from Fairmont State University, Fetty started working at the First Baptist Church Development Center for preschoolers. She loved the work and stayed for 18 years.

Then she took some time off to raise her two children, Garrett and Sara. The family bought a house, and Fetty realized it was necessary for her to go back to work, full-time.

Heritage Christian School had a part-time position available, but Fetty had to pass it up. Instead, she went to work full-time for Head Start.

"I had an associate degree, but needed a four-year degree. I trained there for 10 years," she said. "It was really hard not being able to teach little ones about the Lord."

Fetty prayed for her current job for five years before there was a full-time opening.

"It's so important for the



Rachelle Fetty, who has been teaching Pre-K at Heritage Christian School for eight years, read a story to her class. (Staff photo by Darlene J. Swiger)

children to know there is always someone who loves them and God will always be watching over them," she said. "I love seeing them grow, learning to forgive, be kind and think of others."

The youngsters are also very smart, challenging her to come up with a curriculum that meets her students' needs on different levels.

Heritage Christian uses a phonics-based curriculum that is also Christ-centered. Many of the children who come to the private school already know their

letters and numbers, she said.

"I get additional things ready for them to teach social skills and science. I love it, and they do, too," Fetty said.

She has nine students and can accommodate up to 17.

"I can give them more individualized attention. I call them my babies. They are so caring and kind with big hearts," Fetty said. "They are like sponges and really want to learn. God gives me the wisdom to work with these

children. If we can teach them to make good choices at this age, then parents will have an easier life down the road."

Fetty said the parents are very focused on their children's education.

"I love this school. We're a family here. I tell parents they won't regret selecting Heritage Christian School. The Lord will make it affordable to come here," Fetty said. "I get to go on a home visit of all my students. I learn a lot about them. I respect the child by asking if I can play with their toys.

When they come to school, I teach them social skills about what they can play with and what is mine. We learn about the whole child and family."

School Administrator Linda Simms said Fetty is a delight in every way.

"Our preschool children and their parents absolutely love her. She makes our youngest students feel safe, loved and accepted, all while sneaking in learning and fun activities," Simms said. "We are grateful for her commitment, her insight into preschoolers and for the excellence she has brought to the preschool classroom. She is an amazing gift."

Fetty and her husband, Jim Fetty, a civil engineer at the Morgantown Utility Board, reside in Fairmont. She is a member of the Tree of Life Church, where she works in the nursery and puts on the Christmas play.

"I'm very active. I love my church," she said. "My hobby is my job, my mission. But I do enjoy flower gardening."

She has a friendship garden that contains flowers from many friends.

"Students are like flowers. If children are grounded and rooted in God's love, they will grow up to be more like what the Lord wants them to be."

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