

# Betty Atwell

## Helen Keeling Elementary School

*2012 Rodel Exemplary Teacher Finalist*

### ***Bragging rights***

“ Students leave my classroom knowing how to be kind and how to treat others. Nothing makes me happier than seeing my former kindergarteners go out of their way to help a buddy, even when they think no one is watching.

### ***Engaging students***

“ My students know that they are partially responsible for their own learning. I can keep them motivated by making their learning fun and exciting, but I also teach them that ultimately they are responsible for staying focused and working toward their goals.

### ***A tip for new teachers***

“ While it seems obvious, teachers should really spend the first few weeks of school establishing relationships and expectations. Once you have good rapport with your students, everything else falls into place fairly easily. If you don't take the time, the entire year will be a struggle for you as a teacher, as well as your students.

### ***Collaborating for student success***

“ By sharing ideas and tips with my close colleagues, my students receive the benefit of a wide range of experiences and expertise that I couldn't possibly provide to them on my own.

### ***Making data-driven decisions***

“ In being a kindergarten teacher, I know that you have to be able to think on your feet! I can have the best laid plans for what I want my students to achieve based on the data I have, however, there are constant adjustments and modifications made throughout the day to focus on what will ultimately best benefit my students' learning.

### ***Learning from a mentor***

“ Vicki Olson was an amazing mentor who taught me to approach my students with a very calm, loving demeanor. She helped me to step outside of my comfort zone and believe in my own teaching abilities.



### **Betty Atwell**

Helen Keeling Elementary School

Amphitheater Public Schools

Kindergarten

**Experience:** 10 years in education teaching kindergarten with two of those as an English Language Development teacher

**Degrees:** B.A. in Elementary Education from the University of Arizona; Early Childhood Endorsement; Structured English Immersion Certification

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**The Rodel Exemplary Teacher Initiative honors extraordinary teachers and asks that they each mentor six high-potential student teachers.**

What sets the program apart from typical student teaching programs is that mentor teachers are selected based on their outstanding student achievement in high-poverty schools, their ability to mentor new teachers, and the recommendation of their principals and Rodel's observation team. This ensures that student teachers are learning from the best. In addition, Rodel provides further training and support to both mentors and student teachers to assure Promising Student Teacher Graduates start their careers as outstanding educators.

Since 2004, 119 Rodel Exemplary Teachers have been named and more than 500 Rodel Promising Student Teachers have been mentored.

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***The 2012 Rodel Exemplary Teachers will be announced on November 27 at [www.rodelaz.org](http://www.rodelaz.org).***