

From the desk of Dr. Michael O'Shea, Superintendent of Springfield Schools



From left, Ford Cauffiel, Tatelynn Linares, Phyllis Cauffiel and Dr. Michael O'Shea.

Unsung Heroes

Ford Cauffiel is a man who truly defines “unsung hero.” For almost 25 years, Mr. Cauffiel has touched the lives of tens of thousands of students in the school districts throughout the greater Toledo community through his Students For Other Students (S.O.S) program.

Those unfamiliar with S.O.S. should know that the program brings together elementary students with middle/high school tutors for intensive, after-school academic support. While the academic benefits are many, the experience of working together to accomplish academic goals often bonded the tutee and tutors in a very special friendship.

For many school districts in the greater Toledo area, Mr. Cauffiel's philanthropic efforts have raised and distributed several hundred thousand dollars to fund all the educational materials, a small stipend for program coordination, allow one-on-one tutors to earn minimal wages, provide students with a snacks and transport students safely home. Few of the students benefitting from the S.O.S. program have ever meet Mr. Cauffiel ... yet the supportive role he plays in their lives is significant and lasting.

Throughout each of the years that Mr. Cauffiel has supported S.O.S. in Springfield

Schools, an average of 95 young students have been inspired and tutored by 45 role models. That means that 2,090 students have found a measure of success that might otherwise elude them. We could probably quantify the impact this has had simply by pointing to our ratings over the past four years and our incremental improvement over the preceding 16 years (with the advent of the proficiency testing and rating system). As important, nearly 1,000 high school students have learned the true meaning of service. This measure is nearly impossible to quantify, but we could make a persuasive argument that the quality of the greater Toledo community is better today due to the commitment on the part of both our high school students and those in other district's receiving his support to help our younger readers.

This is a legacy of service made possible through Mr. Cauffiel's generosity. I wonder how many of our now adult students today continue to give and serve because of the model Mr. Cauffiel provided.

Sidebar

Tatelynn McKay Linares is a Springfield High School student who was “hired” by the S.O.S. Program as a 2017 tutor for Holland Elementary School.

This was Tatelynn's second year for helping at Holland, the school she attended. She is remembered fondly by her former teachers and was assigned two elementary students to work with for the five week program. Both students showed a significant improvement on their final test scores. Holland Elementary School S.O.S. coordinator Kristen Quigley shared, “Tatelynn never had to be redirected or coached in what and when to do things—she was spot-on with her approach to her students. Her students loved coming to SOS and thrived in the program. One of the parents spoke with principal, Mrs. Hilary Steinmiller, about the positive impact S.O.S. and Tatelynn had on her child.

The S.O.S. program is indeed #springfieldstrong and Tatelynn is one of the best reasons why. When he learned about Tatelynn's impact on students, Mr. Cauffiel visited Springfield High School with his wife Phyllis and surprised her on March 10, with a \$400 bonus.