



**Teacher: guiding force; opener of minds and hearts; role model; healer; finder of gifts; nurturer of dreams....**

**Gratitude is the first word that comes to my mind when I think of teachers. As we celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week, I look at our children from the youngest to the oldest and see the miracles taking place right in front of our eyes. To teach is a gift; it is a privilege. It has to be done with joy and humility. Our children are blessed by the teachers that touch their lives – beginning with their parents as their first and most powerful of teachers followed by every mentor and teacher that touches their lives.**

**A teacher's first purpose is to bring forth the gifts of each child; to help him develop his character and values; to teach him to live well with a strong sense of self and of service; to grow from being self-centered to world-centered; to care for himself and others; to work for peace within and in his surroundings; to develop curiosity, creativity and a thirst for knowledge; to have the ability to stand for his rights and the rights of others; to be compassionate; to be strong; to know when to lead and when to follow; to live well.....**

**Together we ARE accomplishing this and more. It takes a village to raise a child. To all of us teachers – thank you!**

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Marilyn J. Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.