

## Todd Stillman

“Mr. Stillman is the most unique teacher I’ve ever had,” declares Richard Montgomery High School senior Katie Mallon. “Many teachers care about us, but what sets Mr. Stillman apart is that he is so authentic about it. Even outside of school, many students comment about how awesome and caring Mr. Stillman is.”

Richard Montgomery senior Austin Trupp pipes up, “He is the most genuinely friendly teacher I have ever had. He is famous for his Friday speeches when he says, ‘Use your heads – be safe over the weekend.’”

These accolades are repeated many times over when students at Richard Montgomery High School are asked about their social studies teacher, Todd Stillman. Based on his many accomplishments and demonstrated expertise as an effective instructor, Mr. Stillman could very well be mistaken for a veteran teacher. But it’s only his second year!

Before becoming a teacher, Mr. Stillman had extensive experience working in social studies at the college level and as an English as a Second Language instructor at the China Academy of Engineering and Physics in China. His love of teaching brought him from these experiences into the high school classroom, where he is a natural. “I myself love to learn – I am always learning something new to bring into the classroom and to grow myself,” says Mr. Stillman. “Encouraging my students’ curiosity is most important to me, so that they will want to dig in and get turned on to the subject. I’m always looking for ways to appeal to the teen mind.”

Mr. Stillman’s colleagues are excited to work with him, supporting and applauding his efforts. Shares Kimberly Lansell, Richard Montgomery social studies resource teacher, “During his first year at Richard Montgomery, Mr. Stillman taught Modern World History, National State and Local Government, and Advanced Placement (AP) United States History. This year, as a second year teacher, he has undertaken the daunting task of developing and teaching a new course entitled, International Baccalaureate (IB) Social and Cultural Anthropology. Student response to this

course has been so overwhelmingly positive that we anticipate additional sections next year because of his passionate commitment to teaching.” Students think it is cool that anthropology is so completely different than anything else they have learned, that they can take a course that other schools don’t offer. And, most of all, they want to take a second class with Mr. Stillman.

In addition to being a place to engage in intellectual debates about wide-ranging topics, Mr. Stillman’s classroom is a place where kids achieve. Nearly 90 percent of last year’s AP United States History students earned a 3 or better on their AP exams, and 94 percent of his students passed the MCPS United States History final exam last year. This is an amazing feat, especially considering that his classes are comprised of students with diverse and varying levels of ability.

Juan Gomez, parent of a junior at Richard Montgomery, says, “Mr. Stillman has helped my son broaden his expectations and believe that he could be successful in his first AP course. Without this teacher, my son would not have been able to achieve a 3 on his AP United States History exam.”

“Amazing” emerges as a theme from all of the comments made about Mr. Stillman. He jumped into the Richard Montgomery school community with both feet – sponsoring the Junior Statesmen of America, Chinese Culture and Homework clubs; advising students who are writing their IB extended essays; and participating in several community service fundraising efforts during the school year, including the student-staff basketball game. He even attended IB training on his own time as he prepared to develop the new IB anthropology course – and then spent countless hours actually creating the course.

Nelson McLeod, principal of Richard Montgomery High School, shares the belief of many, “Mr. Stillman is an exceptional teacher and the best new educator that I have observed in my 25-year career with MCPS. He has demonstrated a true commitment to his profession as an educator, encouraging his students to be active thinkers. Mr. Stillman values and encourages worthwhile and open discussions in his classroom, giving the students the feeling that they can make a difference and that their opinions matter.”

Amazing! We certainly hope that Mr. Stillman is with us for many years to come!