

# Gamble Rogers Middle School

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To The American Association of School Libraries,

Walking into the library at Gamble Rogers Middle School, it's obvious that this is where a love of reading is cultivated. Mr. Greco, our media specialist, is the cheerful face greeting all students and teachers who walk through the door with a heart eager to help. Examples of student work from all content areas are displayed on the walls, which add to its inviting atmosphere. It's filled with comfortable spaces for the students to feel welcome in the library, which entices them to visit throughout the day, and ultimately to read more. They navigate the library with ease because Mr. Greco is so linked into their classes, and invites them in during the first week of school to show them what the library has to offer them.

Our Media Center is a place where students are empowered to make choices, and act with self-direction. Some students gravitate to the maker space area where they engage in STEM activities. Others come for the many incentives that Mr. Greco offers to all types of readers, whether their goals are to read a certain number of Sunshine State Books or the Who Was? books. Mr. Greco encourages reluctant writers to write more by giving them the opportunity to author their own books in the media center. Mr. Greco works so closely with teachers that students often see him as another teacher to discuss their reading journey with. Students leave the library with a sense a wonder and amazement of all experiences reading has to offer.

Teachers can also be found flocking to the media center with their students in tow because Mr. Greco has a passionate way of incorporating the standards we're teaching in the class into inquiry-based learning activities that engage and excite the students and teachers alike. He has collaborated with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers on a Holocaust unit, and taught students how to research using vetted sources. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade classes visit the library every two weeks to allow students to self-select books and encourage a love of reading. Students also participate in literature circles led by Mr. Greco following the ELA curriculum. With the 6<sup>th</sup> grade team he helped bring a historical fiction book to life for the students. He showed them maps and provided puzzles. He also provides a forum of Jeopardy-like questions for any topic imaginable. One of the most useful things he provides for teachers and students is vocabulary games and centers in which the students hardly realize they're learning because they are doing it in such a fun and collaborative way.

The Media Center is truly a place for every student and learner. Even struggling readers find a home here due to the fact that Mr. Greco has real conversations with students about books. He gives genuine recommendations because he's not only familiar with the books personally, but he also has a knack for perfectly matching a student to the right book. The students have a voice in the library, and know how to make a recommendation for new books to buy. If someone wants a book that's not available they simply write it on a post-it note, stick it to the Wish List Window and wait for it to arrive. Incorporating a wide spectrum of learners, Mr. Greco also works closely with the gifted teacher to plan activities and challenges.

If any library in the country deserves the National School Library Award, it is certainly Gamble Rogers Middle School. As a Title One school, we often struggle to meet the needs of all of our learners. Our Media Center is the heart of our school. Investing in our Library is an investment in our kids.

Sincerely,

Gamble Rogers ELA Team

*Julie Ren Kadee Higo Karen Shank Danielle Hudson*

**ST. JOHNS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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