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## Overwhelming Generosity for Retiring Springhill Custodian

By Cathy Tyson



Retiring custodian from Springhill Elementary School, Quan Nguyen, was crowned King for a Day. Photo C. Tyson

over 190 individuals and families contributing a total of \$10,550.

Recognizing Nguyen as a "dear man who will always have a place in our hearts," Altbaum presented the retiring custodian with the check. They also gave Nguyen a book containing all of the heartfelt messages posted on the funding website by grateful donors.

"We're here to honor a very special person," said Springhill Parent Faculty Club President Sara Carter at the assembly. "He's like a movie star, probably the most popular guy on campus." Some of the students came to the microphone to explain how Nguyen exemplifies character: always doing what he can to help, with hard work and dedication, and always with a smile on his face.

In addition to the large check, a rose bush that was rescued by the custodian when the school was remodeled years ago now has a prominent place on campus, and will be known as Nguyen's garden with a plaque to honor him. "Even though he'll be gone, his spirit will live on," said Carter.

Nguyen escaped from Vietnam with his pregnant wife in the middle of the night, according to the GoFundMe site. The young couple eventually arrived in America. He worked hard, and put his two children through college.

After the ceremony, he said he has never received a check so large in his life, and he may use some of the money to go back to Vietnam to visit family.

After a quarter century of setting up for meetings, helping with hot lunches, keeping the campus clean and dealing with many student messes, custodian Quan Nguyen is retiring.

Although he usually works behind the scenes, Springhill Elementary School Principal Patrick Gargiulo named Nguyen "King for the Day," and music teacher Vicki Ghulam led students at a recent Spirit Day celebration in a cheerful custom-made song highlighting all that he does for Springhill, with the students chiming in on the chorus: "It's Quan!"

He leaves behind a huge fan club of current and former students as well as their parents, along with the teachers and staff at the Lafayette school.

Wanting to express their sincere thanks for his hard work over the years, parent Kristen Altbaum started a GoFundMe campaign on the Internet with an original goal of raising \$2,500 as a retirement gift. But, ultimately, that goal was surpassed, with

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[back](#)

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