

# Retired Campolindo Spanish teacher's desire to help students 'over rough spots' continues

By David Scholz



Photo courtesy "The Claw"

Campolindo High School's student leadership surrounds Lola Danielli, who rides a scooter donated by English teachers Jake and Jamie Donohoe.

After nearly 60 years in the classroom, Lola Danielli arguably saw it all – the good, the bad, and the gray area.

The Acalanes Union High School District board recently pulled the plug on the popular Campolindo High School Spanish teacher's job after 58 years, but it wasn't her choice. Hoping to work a couple more years, she was shown the door. "It's about money," she lamented.

Danielli, for all the bells and whistles out there, took an old school approach and pushed her

students a little harder. "I had more success teaching the old-fashioned way, and I had so many parents tell me 'Thank you,'" Danielli said.

"I am not an entertainer, I am a teacher," she added.

Technology's role in education was among the big changes she encountered. "I taught for years, and all my kids were able to take the AP class," she continued. "You don't need a computer to learn a foreign language."

For all the benefits of technology that one might claim, one aspect

that she saw engulf the classroom environment in recent years was an increasing amount of unethical behavior on the part of students. "Cheating is rampant," she said, citing the prevalence of students using cell phones to look up vocabulary and then pass the information on to their peers.

So Danielli took pride in not merely teaching Spanish to her students, but values too. "I think it is important that we teach values as much as the subject matter," she said. "If you cheat in high

school, it is going to cost you in life."

While seeing kids as more proactive these days and more inclined to argue with teachers, something that didn't happen when she was a student, Danielli took away fond memories of the kids who came through her classroom.

She thought shifts in student behavior could be the result of changes in the composition of families these days, with both parents working to make ends meet, especially with ever increasing costs of homes.

Among the favorite field trips that she used to take with her students was a special dinner out in San Francisco, and each time there seemed to be no shortage of parents willing to serve as drivers. But over time, that generosity changed. "It is a different world," she said.

As years took their toll on her, especially the pain she felt in her legs, she was blessed to be gifted the use of a scooter in 2021 to get around campus. Taking pride in her commitment to the profession, Danielli regularly arrived on campus at 6:45 a.m., inviting students in to get warm, and stayed late, her classroom light still on between 5 and 6 p.m.

For those teachers who will follow her, Danielli emphasized they need to have a passion for teaching. "If you are doing it just to put bread and butter on the table, you will burn out immediately," she said. "It is not the money; the rewards are internal."

It's through her passion that she saw her students develop academically. "There is nothing more gratifying than when a student comes to me and says, 'I got it, I got it,'" said Danielli.

Since leaving the classroom, she concedes, "I feel like I am wasting away; I am not producing."

Aches and pains are more prevalent now. But she is hopeful that Ygna-

cio Valley High School, looming just across the street from her Concord residence, may be that spark she desires, if only to be a tutor for its students.

"Any kids who want to learn, I can't guarantee they will get an A, but I will get them over the rough spots," said Danielli. "If a kid wants to learn, I would love to be part of that process."

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