**World Teachers’ Day 2022**

**Announcer:** This is a Queensland Department of Education podcast.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** World Teachers’ Day, is a day to celebrate and acknowledge the wonderful work of all teachers across our state.

Hi, I’m Virginia Bowdidge, from the Department of Education, and I’ll be talking with some of Queensland’s most extraordinary teachers, about their teaching moments that have inspired them.

Today, legal studies teacher and community services’ coordinator, Ben Princehorn, from Sunshine Coast Grammar School, joins me to talk about his teaching moments.

Hi Ben, thanks for talking to me as part of our World Teachers’ Day series.

**Ben Princehorn:** It’s my pleasure Virginia, thanks for having me.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** How long have you been a teacher and what inspired you to choose teaching as a career?

**Ben Princehorn:** I started teaching in 1997 was my first appointment. A great career. Lots of different opportunities and yeah, I’ve had a ball. I think, probably what got me in, initially was, that one teacher. I think we’ve all got that one teacher. I had that one teacher, a teacher who really inspired me as a student. Yeah, it really grew from there, so I was very, very lucky to have that mentor in my life as a young man. I’ve got a family of teachers as well. My mothers a retired teacher, my sisters a primary school teacher, uncles and aunts. Yes, it’s definitely in the blood somewhere I’m sure.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** And what was it about that one teacher that inspired you?

**Ben Princehorn:** The teachers that took their time and particularly this teacher I speak of, who took his time with me to, I guess show me that teaching and education doesn’t stop in the classroom, that it’s about looking outside and really looking beyond the school gates and that education is a much wider field than simply the 8:30 or 3:30 or whatever it might be in the classroom. There’s just so much more to it. It’s got so many different layers

**Virginia Bowdidge:** And what subjects do you teach?

**Ben Princehorn:** So, I teach legal studies here at Sunshine Coast Grammar School. I teach years 10, 11 and 12. My other role at the school is the Co-ordinator of Community Services, so I oversee the charitable programs, the outreach programs and delivery of our service learning here at the grammar school.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** What is it that you love about your job?

**Ben Princehorn:** Everyday is different. No two days are the same in education. I love it, it’s dynamic. There’s something for everybody in teaching and the fact that we take on so many roles, is actually a true blessing. The fact that we are such an important part in young people’s lives, I think is super important. We’re certainly challenged every day. I have no doubt about that. That’s what I really love about it, that you can be a voice in somebodies life and help them to move forward, navigate their formative years in early lives that’s important.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** What are the memorable moments in your career that have shaped the teacher that you are today?

**Ben Princehorn:** There’s probably several. I’ve been really fortunate, I think in and look, this is one of the great things about teaching is that it is a portable profession. I’ve been lucky enough to teach in a variety of settings. One of my early placements was in a remote school in regional New South Wales and working with one of the large indigenous population at that particular school was really amazing to see the community coming together and our different unique perspective on education and how education is really that community and how that particular school with such a central hub for that community. I was able to travel to different parts of regional Queensland and found myself also teaching overseas at the Australian International School in Hong Kong for a couple of years.

Community just plays such an important role, wherever you travel to and to me I’ve been able to take bits and pieces from each of those experiences. The common thread is that there is a real sense of community between, teachers, students and parents wherever go and that forms a basis of any good, you know, community wherever we are and I think so much good can come from that, so, these are memorable little moments in my 25, 26 years of teaching.

Be able to travel and experience the world around us and cross a couple of States has been really fantastic. As well, I have met some amazing people, I mean, I think teaching also gives you the ability to meet such wonderful people, and people who have a great passion for what they do. There’re some people that work just so tirelessly in supporting our young people and often without the credit that they deserve. I’m also totally blissed to have worked with amazing kids. I mean, these are students now that remember you, you know, 10 years, 15 years after they’ve left school that come back. I think that’s a really wonderful thing about teaching too, is that we do actually have an impact and you know, these little rememberable moments that do pop up. I capture everyone when I can.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Makes it sound it’s a very rewarding career!

**Ben Princehorn:** Oh, look**,** absolutely Virginia. I think the reward really is, you know, in the pay back. And the pay back is often not, you know automatically straight away, it might take years but there is those students and those parents that will come back and say that you’ve had such a wonderful impact. We’ve had students of mine, of ours at the Sunshine Coast Grammar School that have gone on to do amazing things with their lives and I guess for me, my role in community services here at the school, I really love to see that students go off and become, the wonderful kind people that we develop here, they continue that into their adult lives and continue to give back to their communities. I’ve, we’ve had children, students rather that have gone off and set up their own charitable organisations, become very philanthropic in their communities and that to me is just outstanding you know. That’s why you do what you do and we are really lucky to have that.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Yeah, lots of proud moments.

**Ben Princehorn:** Indeed!

**Virginia Bowdidge:** And can you tell me a little bit more about your role as the Community Services?

**Ben Princehorn:** I think the grammar school, like, like, like all schools have some degree of service program and charitable outreach program that we apply to our school setting and the grammar school, I guess, we took a unique approach to that and I was able to work with some really amazing staff, families and students to develop a program of outreach, we call ours, *“Grammar Helping Hands”*, and our program basically reaches out to local charitable organisations and our approach is that we really like a hand’s on model of giving. So, we connect with local cancer charities, local homeless organisations, local health initiates and we really set our students the goal of, tangibly giving, so, an approach perhaps beyond a gold coin donation or free dress day or barbeque or sausage sizzle. We go and meet the people that we are working with that we are supporting so we will go into the backyards of a cancer clients who might be undergoing a range of different health issues and we’ll work with the cancer charity alongside them to do a backyard makeover, to do some painting, some cleaning, we’ll, you know, do some cooking, some meals, whatever it might be and for a small window of time, we’re able to show our kids exactly what it’s like to give back to be service focus and to be a good member of the community, that there are people around us that need our help, that we don’t have to look far to find someone to help. And it’s really, I think, helped to bridge the gap when student’s understandings of service and of giving and the fact it’s actually quite a simple thing to do often but it has such huge outcomes. So, we’ve been really luck to do that.

What advice would you give to students thinking of studying teaching or career changes, thinking of moving into teaching?

**Ben Princehorn:** It’s an absolutely dynamic career. It’s very different to 25, 26 years ago, however, it really offers something different for everybody. It’s an amazing opportunity, you know more than ever we need people that are ready and able to take our students to a place beyond the school gates, showing them the rest of the world, showing them what’s out there, what is actually around the corner because I think more than ever, teaching is much more than simply about the classroom. It’s about giving kids perspective, giving kids responsibility and knowing that teachers play a really key and critical role in the community. It’s so important, so, if you are someone who loves connecting with your local community about developing kids, building passionate young individuals, then it’s the perfect career choice for you.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** That’s great, thanks.

How will you or your school be celebrating World Teachers’ Day this year?

**Ben Princehorn:** Yeah, look, we um, we’ve got a little bit of a tradition, it’s a really beautiful tradition actually Virginia. What we do here at the Sunshine Coast Grammar School is, we acknowledge with a morning tea. I’m sure that’s not unique in any way, I’m sure schools all over the country will be doing that. We do recognise our teachers and our staff, of cause, behind every teacher, or along side every teacher, should I say is a huge team of administrative and executive staff that work tirelessly. We celebrate teaching and education with a morning tea and coupled with that we have students who often come and play music or recite poetry and give thanks to the teachers. It’s a very beautiful occasion. At the same time on World Teachers’ Day this year, we celebrate each year by holding a fun raiser at the school to support education in developing countries. We’ve got relationships with schools in both Zambia and in Timor-Leste and we support education programs in both of those countries. Education and in particular, focusing on teacher training in both of those countries, so, we’re really looking forward to that.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Thanks very much for your time Ben.

**Ben Princehorn:** it’s my pleasure. Thanks very much for having me.

**Announcer** You have been listening to a Queensland Department of Education podcast.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** The Department of Education acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands from across Queensland. We pay our respects to the elders, past and present, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture, and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.