

Aldrish Jimenez

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a special memory you have of

Kaiser/Woodland Elementary School and how it impacted your life.

I transferred over to Kaiser during my fourth grade year of elementary school, and it was a total culture shock to say the least. I had started at College Park where the demographics were primarily Hispanic, and switching over to Kaiser seemed so unexpected, so different. Apart from the differences that I saw, everyone was welcoming, especially my 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Heeschen. She has become my all-time favorite teacher, because she introduced me into a community that I could be fond of, she had taught me some of the most important social skills, but most importantly, she gave me away from home. She would persistently be willing to help me and family, knowing well that our family was facing adverse financial issues at home. One of the biggest mediums of help she gave me was the introduction to the book. I had never been so fascinated by turning to the next page to read what would happen. She would also create incentives for me to be the best that I could, by making a long chain of folded up scraps of paper, students could document the progress and have some form of knowing that they had accomplished something in their tiny lives. My greatest memory of Kaiser was a little bitter sweet as it was the last day of fourth grade and everyone in the classroom feared that they would lose their beloved teacher. I remember sitting in my tiny desk with my tiny chair, thinking of all the afternoons I spent telling her what I had read that day, and it all seemed to be coming to an end. And then she brought down the paper reading chains that we had worked on so diligently

throughout the year. My chain had been the longest, and Mrs. Heeschen asked the class to applaud me, and then she gave me a hug. I had been filled with so many emotions, I had no idea whether to cry because I was moving on from her warm embrace, or crying tears of joy because I had been the best reader in the class. Whatever the reason was, I was filled with joy as she had been the first person at the school who had made me feel welcome, she had been the first person at the school who had made me feel like I belonged in a school with different people. And thus, Mrs. Heeschen represented a change for me, she showed me that I could be a better person and that I could one day be a success if I just dedicate myself to my craft.