World Teacher Day podcast

Pree Jeewandara

Announcer: This is the Queensland Department of Education Podcast.

Virginia Bowdidge: Every day, Queensland teachers make a difference in the lives of students in diverse communities across the state. There are more than 50,000 teachers in more than 1,200 state schools teaching more than 543,000 students a day. Teachers make a difference, and teaching can make a difference in your life. Teaching is a profession with incredible opportunities to take you to amazing places.

Science and digital technology teacher Pree joins me to talk about his career to date.

Pree: Hi, my name is Pree.

Virginia Bowdidge: Pree, what's your current role?

Pree: I'm currently working as a senior teacher at Doomadgee State School.

Virginia Bowdidge: What first attracted you to teaching as a profession?

Pree: I think I had a lot of teachers in my schooling years, and particularly my high schooling, that I really looked up to, and I think they put me in a very good mindset to consider education or teaching as a career. So I think I was really excited by the fact that I would find that reward of being able to make a difference and seeing that.

Virginia Bowdidge: What is it about the job that you do love?

Pree: It's those moments, I think, where you know you've made a difference, and that's happened to me in very different ways. It might take quite some time. Particularly, one student who I often think back is someone who I had when I was teaching grade two. He struggled to read and his parents would say to me that they'd sort of given up reading with him at home because they would often end up pulling out hair. We persisted and we sort of intervened in the right way, and then after some time that year, that child was reading quite proficiently. So I think it's things like that. Being fortunate enough to see some students graduate, then cross paths with the students after they've graduated school, and to hear some of the things that they particularly enjoyed, a particular subject, and that's had an influence on their career. That sort of thing.

Virginia Bowdidge: Would you say it's a fulfilling career?

Pree: Absolutely, yeah.

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Virginia Bowdidge: Can you describe what a typical day would involve for yourself?

Pree: Is there a typical day in our profession? I guess, every day is very different, but my day consists of working across the children from years 7, 8, 9 and 10. A huge part of that is taken up by finding the right motivations for the students to engage in what we do.

Virginia Bowdidge: What's the lifestyle for you at Doomadgee like?

Pree: It's very different to the lifestyle that I was accustomed to in Brisbane. It's completely turned upside down. I think, currently, I would say for the better, and I do enjoy that significant change. So it's a very relaxed lifestyle. My day in Brisbane entailed lots of commuting, I would spend a lot of time sitting in my car, and that is something that is completely gone from my day. I've got a couple of hundred meters to walk to get to work, which is quite amazing, and I'm sure a lots of people in Brisbane will be envious to hear that. Obviously, in some of those lifestyle aspects, the lifestyle is very much more relaxed. The commuting, just even the community life itself. But that for me is the big challenge in this community, is finding the right motivation for the children to engage. I'm thoroughly enjoying my time out here.

Virginia Bowdidge: What would your advice be to students who are considering teaching as a profession?

Pree: It's absolutely a great profession. I think it's one that is very rewarding, but I do also advise anyone who is interested to come in and spend some time in a classroom. I know teachers are always happy to have some extra hands on deck, so definitely get yourself involved and see what's happening in the classrooms. If you think the fit is right, then absolutely, I think it's a very rewarding profession.

 Last year, I was a very lucky to be able to travel internationally and spend some time in classrooms in Finland, actually. That was something that I really enjoyed, and I think that gave me some inspiration of what to do back home, here. But I think there are lots of opportunities, and as we just mentioned earlier, there's lots of things that the teaching career can take you.

Virginia Bowdidge: Okay, great. Well, thank you very much for your time.

Pree: Thank you.

Announcer: Got a question? Email podcast@qed.qld.gov.au.

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