

Tutoring for success

Prepping for the SAT, GED or the state exit exam available at Armenta Academy

By **LOIS EVEZICH**

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Sometimes students need a little help in one subject or another. Sometimes there are challenges that seem too difficult to resolve. And sometimes a special needs student requires more than special classes or teachers.

That's where Julie Armenta comes in.

Q. What is a learning academy?

A. An academy is more than a school, in that it offers all educational programs, schooling, tutoring, workshops, study hall, etc. We take all ages K-adult and offer individualized education tailored to each student's needs, seven days a week, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Q. Why did you get started with the academy?

A. After being a teacher in both public and private schools, I found a real need for students to get a program that works for them rather than failing at a general program that doesn't fit their needs. The public schools do what they can, but so many students are not getting the education they need and deserve. There is no other program out there that does what we do. We have families that drive a good distance for our programs.

Q. How long have you been in business?

A. We have been in business since 1989.

Q. What do you see as your mission?



PRIVATE ACADEMY: Julie Armenta, owner of Armenta Learning Academy in Laguna Niguel.
LOIS EVEZICH, THE REGISTER

A. Our mission is to inspire, empower, motivate, and educate students and reach them not only academically, but through the "whole child" to teach them to be a success.

Q. What do you screen for?

A. We are here for students who do not fit into the public school system. They need smaller class ratios and a more nurturing environment. These students can benefit from programs where we work closely with the parents and have flexible scheduling, programs that are specialized and individualized to help the student succeed by moving at the student's own pace, and can raise a student up to 2 - 3 learning levels in one academic year for those that are behind.

Q. How many on the staff, regular and part time?

A. We have three full-time staff and two part-time.

Q. And how many students?

A. We have between 10 and 15 students on the premises at any given time, depending on the day and schedule. We provide a 6:1 classroom ratio and we work 1:1 with children as needed throughout the school day. Our ratio is much smaller for our after school tutoring programs depending on the needs of the student.

Q. What ages or grade levels?

A. We teach all ages and grade levels from pre-K to adult ed.

Q. What special programs do you offer?

A. We offer programs for accelerated studies, early graduation, mentoring, social skills classes, guest speakers, peer support, life skills and job skills workshops, home school support and after school enrichment programs, as well as special needs and gifted programs.

Q. Are you open year round?

A. Yes we are, with a flexible schedule that works with the needs of the families. We have a fantastic summer oceanography program with across the curriculum, hands-on activities and field trips. Students also come into our summer program to prepare for the upcoming school year or take classes for credit.

Q. Do you have after-school tutors?

A. Yes our tutors are available from 8 am to 8 pm.

Q. What outside activities do you offer?

A. We have a community outreach program called Armenta Angels where our students do fund-raising or activities like beach clean up to help our community. We also have a fishing club, pet education, field trips, mentoring and outdoor education. We are always open to starting more programs any time we find a need for a particular student or group.

Q. What fees do you charge for your services?

A. Our tutoring fees are \$40 per hour for on site tutoring and \$60 per hour for off-site, at your home tutoring. The fees for the school vary case by case, since each program is individually tailored for each student. We don't set those fees until we speak with the parent and student in depth to determine the best program for each student.

Q. Tell us about the Armenta Pet Academy.

A. The Pet academy was founded to provide therapy for children and animals. Putting the two together has a way to heal the hearts of both the dogs and the children especially our special needs children. We also train dogs and teach children how to work with pets and be responsible for them. I have always loved children and animals, since I was a small child myself.

Q. How else do you reach out to the community to get your message across about education?

A. I am involved with several organizations, such as Council for Exceptional Children, Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, Council for Special Education Administrators, the Council of Division of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners, and Association for Dyslexia and Autism. I love to go to other schools or community events and speak to families and students as much as I can about the importance of school, family and community. Currently, I am finishing my book Success for Every Child, (The parent manual we have all been waiting for.) This book will show parents how to create success for all children, such as coping with learning challenges, obesity, only child, and more.

For information, call Julie Armenta at 949-367-9473

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