

March, 2021
Hope & Resilience
Leah Roland

2020 was a lot. As teachers navigated an abrupt ending to face to face teaching and learning in the spring, we were left wondering about the unknowns and worrying about our students. My colleagues and I worked to make daily contact with our students and families ensuring they were safe and fed. August arrived and we began to navigate a school year unlike any other. Virtual teaching? Hybrid phase? Students who attend 5 days? All 3 schedules at the same time? Ok, we will do our best.

Then, in November of 2020, my professional journey took another unexpected turn. Enrollment of students who qualified for special education services were down in my building. The district needed people to transfer into flexible teaching positions to support the mission of filling vacancies due to Covid causing an unusually high number of extended teacher absences.

I saw this flexible position as an opportunity. An opportunity for growth and for experience that I would otherwise not have gotten. Since November I have been in a specialized preschool setting and have gained experience in the Autism, TLP, ELP and BSP programs. I have gotten to work with dozens of our wonderful students and my circle of dedicated colleagues, once small, continues to grow with each assignment.

Each day is a new opportunity. A new challenge for me to put my skills to the test. A chance to make meaningful connections with students and professionals alike. By choosing to embrace this change, I choose to have a positive outlook.

Though change can be scary and sometimes uncomfortable, it pushes us to grow. We have a choice when faced with change. Will we have a positive or negative outlook? We can choose to be negative and pessimistic or **we can choose to believe in ourselves and our ability to overcome.**

I invite you to think about something in your life that may be challenging you or making you feel uncomfortable. Is there an opportunity for growth? Can you find a bright side and choose to focus on positives?

“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall” - Confucius

