

A Farewell To...

The Coscarellas

As the school year of 2021 comes to an end, Salida High School staff and students are sad to see Jim and Brandy Coscarella leave to travel and start a new chapter of their lives. The Coscarellas have dedicated over 15 years of hard work and devotion to Salida High School's students and staff.

"The best thing working here is the kids; watching them grow and compete and participate in activities. It's special to see that," said Jim Coscarella.

"Getting to follow kids from being 14 years old coming into high school all the way through graduation is really special, and then watching them grow into adults when you work here for 15 years, I mean we've been to students' weddings and we know their children now. It's pretty powerful to see people become adults," stated Brandy Coscarella.

The Coscarellas hope to be able to find themselves with more time to do the things they love such as traveling, hiking, and spending valuable time with their grandson.

"It's a job that requires a tremendous amount of time in order to do it right; we always gave it 100% and were always available seven days a week. When you do it for so many years, there's a time when you almost feel like you're married to it, and we didn't want to be married to it. We wanted to move on and try something that maybe gave us a little bit more freedom and time off," said Jim Coscarella.

The Coscarella's didn't plan to find themselves working here at the SHS together. Brandy worked at SHS when the previous athletic director retired, opening up the position that Jim would later take.

"I had a lot of encouragement from the community to apply, so I did. It's been a fabulous ride; I wouldn't change it for the world," said Jim Coscarella.

These jobs allowed Jim and Brandy to work together along with being able to stay close with their kids in the school district. They were able to participate in their kid's sports activities and didn't have to miss one of their games due to work. It worked out perfectly for them.

"I would not have done this job if Brandy wasn't with me; we're a good team. The staff have been great, and we're going to miss Mrs. Thompson. We've been with her forever," explained Jim Coscarella.

"I'm definitely going to miss the enthusiasm when working around high school students. I'll miss the energy of SHS and our co-workers, as it's been like a family. We didn't all plan to stop at the same time, but when it's time, then it's time to move on. It'll be good for the next group to get to start together and develop those relationships," explained Brandy Coscarella.

"I've always told kids, you're in control of moving forward and the path you want to go to. When it becomes stagnant or you're losing your joy or you want to try something different, then do

Story by Makiah Parris

it. Get after it, and do it. You can't be afraid of taking risks in your life because you just don't know what it's going to bring," said Jim Coscarella.

As Brandy Coscarella said, "Change is inevitable." The new job openings at SHS creates an opportunity for responsible leaders to do what they love most and contribute to our high school.

"My hope is they're gonna hire another person that has the energy and the passion that will move forward with what we've had in place and what we've done and provide it to our community and the kids," said Brandy Coscarella.

Salida High has chosen Marko Hahn to step in to take the role of becoming SHS's new athletic director. Hahn graduated from Texas A&M University and has spent the past 21 years working with student athletes, including 11 years as an athletic director. It's exciting to be able to welcome Hahn and his wife, Rebecca Woolmington, along with their son to our school and community. We say our farewells to Jim and Brandy Coscarella as they leave to find joy in trying something new.

"We'll still be around watching events. We have a passion for all the different activities that go on at the high school; I don't think we'll be able to stay away. I'm sure we'll be cheering somewhere for somebody," said Brandy Coscarella.



COSCARELLAS: Pictured above, Brandy and Jim Coscarella stand together in the desert.

Tami Thompson



FAMILY: Pictured above, Principal Tami Thompson stands between her daughter and late husband.

Story by Lulu Zettler

Every day, Salida High School is bustling with the teachers, students, and faculty working hard, but one person plays a major role in keeping our school running: Tami Thompson.

Thompson started working at SHS in the start of the 1998/9 school year.

"We were living in Denver, and my oldest son was going into high school. We weren't thrilled with the school he would be attending, so I applied for a job here," Thompson said.

Thompson's parents and her husband's parents were already living in Salida before she decided to make the move, and they thought it would be a great place to raise their kids. She also felt that teaching would be a great way to work with them.

Teaching wasn't always what she wanted to do though. She originally had her degree in business administration. After managing several businesses and doing some accounting, she went back to school to get a degree for teaching.

Thompson taught vocational business, accounting, and computer science, and then later moved to economics at SHS. After about 8 years in the classroom, Thompson started to work as the dean half time and teaching half time. Then, when the school was shuffling people around internally, she applied for the principal position.

"I loved being out in the hallway talking to kids and in the classroom, but all that administrative stuff takes up a

lot of my time," she said.

She has to do a lot of evaluations and paperwork that is not nearly as fun as spending time with kids.

"Unfortunately, education has become a lot about other things," Thompson said. "I'd rather just have it be about the kids and not just GPA and all that other stuff," Thompson said.

A major event in her time as principal was the process of building the new high school where she worked on applying for grants and other responsibilities with the new construction.

"I've been sitting in this chair for thirteen years, so I was here as principal when we applied for the Best Grant," Thompson said.

She was involved in the whole process of designing and building the new school and moving everything. They visited many other schools to decide how they were going to build the new SHS. They visited everything from completely digital schools, to schools with classrooms that had no doors.

"It was fun to have my voice in the part to say, 'Yes this is a good idea!'" Thompson said.

After about 20 years of working at Salida High School as a teacher, dean of students, and principal, Thompson has decided that it is time to retire. She is moving out of her house and moving into a smaller one this year.

"I just need to take some time to concentrate on myself and figure out what my next steps in life are," she said.