



Michael Kimm: Drama teacher and “rock star”

By Dave Sheehan, CCSD Communications

You might say Michael Kimm is a rock star – literally. The theatre teacher at Cimarron-Memorial High School has been climbing rocks for nearly 20 years. Not only is it a challenging and rewarding sport, but the Michigan native says it helps him on the job as well.



An eight-year veteran of the Clark County School District (CCSD), Kimm worked at Legacy High School and Peterson Behavior School prior to joining Cimarron-Memorial three years ago. Outside of his work as an educator, Kimm can boast many professional credits both in New York City and around the country. He has been a professional actor, director, musician, designer, technician, stuntman and choreographer. In terms of theatre, you name it, he’s done it. And since childhood, he’s been finding ever more challenging rocks to climb.

Kimm spends a lot of time at Red Rock Canyon, a world-class climbing area on our doorstep. However, he also has climbed in Zion and Yosemite National Parks, the Sierra Nevada, the Rocky Mountains and dozens of other climbing areas in North America.

Most folks might think of rock climbing as perhaps one of the most dangerous sports around. Not so, says Kimm. “If done correctly, rock climbing is a relatively safe sport. There are, on average, only about 10 rock climbing deaths in the U.S. each year.” To help ensure safety, Kimm says it’s wise to climb with a partner. Kimm also refutes the depiction of rock climbing as an extreme sport. “It’s calm, specific and calculated, with layers of redundancy in terms of safety.”

There’s also the psychological part of rock climbing. “It’s one-third physical and two-thirds mental. It’s about controlling your fear, trusting in yourself and having faith you will succeed.” These factors and others also find their way into Kimm’s approach to teaching. “My experiences as a rock climber help me convey the concepts of balance and power to my students. They learn to make bold choices and to trust and support their scene partners.”

Do his students want to join him on a rock-climbing expedition? Absolutely, says Kimm. But he insists they wait until after they graduate from high school. In the meantime, they can practice strategy and self-control as part of the Cimarron-Memorial theatre program.

For more information about rock climbing, Kimm suggests you visit www.rockclimbing.com or www.mountainproject.com.