

# AMERICAN GRADUATE CHAMPION

## Tema Encarnacion

Tema is a passion-driven ESOL teacher at Glen Burnie High School in Glen Burnie, Maryland. As an ESOL teacher, she is honored to work with students as they enter schools in the United States for the first time.



### Empowering Students!

Tema tells MPT how her students are often scared because they must navigate a new language, a new country and a new culture. In her class and her interactions with students, she empowers them to take control of their learning. Says Tema, *“they go from hesitant recipients of information when they*

*arrive, to confident, empowered, agents of change.”* Tema works closely with students to develop their language, social, and digital skills to allow them to express themselves in meaningful ways.

### Impacting Students!

When asked to share an impactful story about her students, Tema relays, *“as do most teachers, I believe that I impact the lives of children every day!”* Most recently, she has been integrating social advocacy and stewardship into her teaching through cross-curricular, language-rich instruction about the Chesapeake Bay.

*As a passionate advocate for the Bay, it seemed natural to incorporate this passion into my teaching. I have been working with another ESOL teacher in the county to develop a program called, From Students to Stewards, in which my high school students go from recipients of learning to stewards of the Bay. They have spent the school year learning about the Bay, its history, ecology and significance for Maryland and the region, while improving their language skills and learning about their new country. As our culminating project this year, my students take what they have learned and are teaching younger elementary students about the importance of this natural resource, while practicing their English.*

## Students Become the Teachers!

Recently her students became the teachers of what they have learned throughout the year at a day long demonstration of learning at Sandy Point State Park. See Tema's students in action [on the bay!](#)



*I knew that this was a meaningful experience for them, when one day, out of the blue, one of my students came up to me and said, "Mrs. E., we need to save the Bay, it's REALLY important"*

Tema says these students will remember this experience for their whole lives, because even the most reticent students have participated in making the program a success. They have gained knowledge and skills that will allow them to advocate for something they feel is important and they know how to protect our natural resources. This has been as meaningful for her as it has been for them as she has been able to bridge the two things she loves most: teaching and the Bay!

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- **2015 Local PBS LearningMedia Digital Innovator**  
[Learn more](#)
- **2015 National Geographic Grosvenor Teacher Fellow**  
[Learn more](#)
- **2015 Northern Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce Teacher of the Year**

