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## Q & A with Matt Huffine: Teaching near and far

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Matthew Huffine was born in the town of Oyster Bay, Long Island. At that time his father was beginning what would be a more than 20-year career as an Air Force officer. So the family had a new home every year or so until young Matthew was 10 and entering fourth grade.

Norton AFB in San Bernardino was his father's last duty station, so Huffine for the most part grew up in the Inland Empire. (At the time Highland had more orange trees than houses and members of San Manuel Band of were living in poverty a few blocks away.)

Huffine graduated from Aquinas High School after attending St. Adelaides in Highland for seventh and eighth grade — a decision he and his parents made early in the '70s, when public schools were considered unsafe due to racial tensions.

He graduated with a double major from UC Riverside with a B.S. in Environmental Science and Biology. During college, he worked part-time with the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Geological Survey.

Upon graduation he got married and worked as a beekeeper with his best man for two years before entering grad school with his wife at CSU San Bernardino to secure their teaching credentials. Their first teaching jobs took them to Yucca Valley High School.

Two years later with their first son, they began a five-year stint with Wycliffe Bible Translators/Summer Institute of Language. They started out with training in Idyllwild, then Dallas, Texas, Uvalde, Texas, and Mexico. Their first and only assignment due to health took them to Iraian Jaya (now know as West Irian) Indonesia where they helped open a new school, Hillcrest International School.

In the early 1990s they moved back to the States with their 5-year-old son and new daughter. Huffine took a job teaching math and science at Hesperia Junior High School. Seven years later he took a job at the Lewis Center in 2000, the year the Mojave River Campus opened. Huffine is now in his 11th school year at the Lewis Center and 24th year overall as a teacher.

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Q: Describe a special memory you have of Apple Valley.

A: In the '90s and at the turn of the century, my family used to rock climb with ropes and gear on the rocks behind Horseman Center and at Dead Man's Point. Good memories.

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Q: What do you do in your free time?

A: Garden, read, camp, hike, watch movies, prepare curriculum for a new course at the Academy for Academic Excellence/Lewis Center for Educational Research

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Q: Tell us one thing that most people don't know about you.

A: I was born with clubbed feet. I've hiked the John Muir Trail in the Sierra Nevada.

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Q: What is your passion?

A: Be a part of any solution that results in the furthered appreciation of, respect for and preservation of the God's creation.

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Q: What person, living or from history, would you most like to have dinner with and why?

A: I would always like to meet and share a meal and a conversation with any godly person from the Old or New Testament, however I would enjoy an evening with John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, Wesley Powell, Lewis and/or Clark, John Adams ... A survivor of the Civil War, World War I. World War II or Korean War ... and the Ice man found in the Alps a few years back.

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Q: Where do you get your values from?

A: My parents and the Bible along with bits and pieces picked up from teachers and other significant people in my life because they lived them and put flesh on them.

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Q: Who is someone who had a big influence on your life?

A: My parents and the Hornibrook Family (scout leader in San Bernardino during my high school years).

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Q: What is your favorite quotation?

A: I do not have one favorite one ... I don't do favorites too well. I'm too eclectic that way.

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Q: Tell us about your faith.

A: I was raised in the home of Unitarians in the North, South, West and is Asia. I attended Catholic school from seventh through 12th grades. Accepted Christ at a Sunday meeting in Riverside California after a sermon given by Harvest's/Calvary Chapel's Greg Laurie. Was discipled by a Jewish Christian and have attended High Desert Church since moving to the High Desert in 1992.

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Q: What is your secret to living a happy, satisfying life?

A: Living in harmony with my conscience, my family, my community, with my/the environment and my Creator all the while being driven by what I am passionate about.

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Q: What words of advice do you have for the next generation?

A: "Strive to live in harmony with your conscience, your family, your community, with your environment and your Creator all the while being driven by what you are passionate about."

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Q: What's your favorite sports team and why?

A: The Dodgers. My father was born and raised in Brooklyn New York in the 1930's and remembers taking the trolley to the polo grounds to watch them play through the fence when he did not have the pocket change as a kid to get a seat. Those stories plus sitting out night after night with him when I was young listening to games made my blood blue I guess. When our family settled down in So. Cal in the late 1960's, we started going to games at the Ravine watching teams made up of players that are Hall of Famers now... Playing the sport also helped.

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Q: What is something you are particularly proud of?

A: My family, wife and children. We have hung in there through a lot of ups and downs and still love each other.

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Q: What's your favorite movie and why?

A: I really don't have favorites. I do like the following elements, however: Action, cerebral, documentary, real life, nature, emotional drama, suspense. As long as it's either clean or the language and situation are in keeping with the theme, plot and character development.

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Q: What is the best thing about your job?

A: I get to be a scientist and in the process can help impassionate young minds that already lean toward understanding themselves and their place in the world around them.

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Q: Tell us about a special vacation.

A: We enjoy camping in Yosemite, along the Central Coast and in the Coastal Redwoods

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Q: Tell us about a happy memory in your first car.

A: Driving to the beach in for the first time by myself while in high school listening to Yes, Chicago, Styx ... music ... before there was the 15, 215, or Orange Crush, Cajon Pass ... etc ... I loved it when I saw the sign saying “Beach Cities.”

Who would you like to see profiled in an upcoming Q&A? Drop us a line at [News@AppleValley-Review.com](mailto:News@AppleValley-Review.com).

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