



Cliff Rockmuller is a foreign language teacher at the High School. He has been working in the Rondout Valley School District for 23 years. Cliff began his teaching career teaching the children of migrant workers in Florida, NY. He then moved to the bilingual program in Middletown, NY where he worked for 9 years.

When he first came to Rondout, Cliff worked in the Middle School as a Spanish teacher. He taught both Spanish and French his last five years there. He left the Middle School after 13 years to teach only Spanish at the High School and to get away from Mrs. Herman, who subsequently followed him to the high school!

Cliff graduated from Hewlett HS on Long Island. He then attended The University of Maryland at College Park, SUNY New Paltz and La Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Seville, Spain. He moved to Ulster County because he had lots of family in the state and because of the area's natural beauty. Cliff met his wife Doris while traveling in Mexico in 1989 and has been married for 18 years.

When asked what his favorite part of teaching is, Cliff responded by saying "I feel like my development was arrested while I was attending public school and I became a permanent school aged kid." He feels that he relates well to the students, and vice versa. He loves working with kids, laughing, listening and sharing his adventures with them. Cliff has brought or created several school events to the High School including Plum Day and Bike to Work Day and has a Trivia Contest for students each year during Foreign Language Week.

When it comes to Cliff's least favorite part of his job, he says "Over the years there are more and more rules that take you away from teaching and focus you on state mandates that do not necessarily enhance learning. Sometimes I feel like we, as

teachers, are spending time filling out forms and jumping through hoops instead of dealing with students as humans.”

While at Rondout, Cliff ran the flag football program at the Middle School for 10 years and founded the Ski & Snowboard Club. He has traveled extensively with students, including trips to Spain, France, Italy, Costa Rica and Mexico. He participated in the Model Organization of American States, for 10 years with his good friend Jim Sullivan and has been department liaison for the Foreign Language and English as a Second Language departments for the past several years.

He enjoys skiing, telling a joke now and then (more often now than then), playing music and playing sports, especially volleyball and golf. Cliff is a past president and current board member of the Center for Creative Education, an organization that works with inner city youth in Kingston and surrounding areas. Cliff loves all kinds of music, but is a folkie at heart. Three years ago he began a singer songwriter concert series in Stone Ridge, attracting national and international performers. He invites everybody to come out to a show. He even serves free snacks. For more information on CCE’s “One World” series go to their website at **[cceconcerts.com](http://cceconcerts.com)**.

This will be Cliff’s last year at Rondout, as he plans to retire at the end of the school year after 33 years of teaching. He is excited about this and plans to do things with his soon to be free time. Traveling will of course be on his list of things to do, along with volunteering, spending time with friends and family and expanding the concert series that he created in Stone Ridge. This summer Cliff and his wife will be traveling to Italy to visit Doris’ family.

Cliff has loved his experience in the Rondout Valley School District. He feels lucky to have worked with wonderful colleagues and amazing kids. “It has been a long and rewarding road that I have been traveling, with lots of interesting turns. I can’t wait to see what the future will bring my way” concludes Señor Rock.