

Edmonton Public Schools'
DISTRICT RECOGNITION
2016 - 2017

HONOURS
AND REWARDS
FALL TO THOSE
WHO SHOW THEIR GOOD
QUALITIES
IN ACTION. — ARISTOTLE



Program

Kick-Off Video

Greetings and introductions

Board Chair Michelle Draper

Opening Remarks

Board Chair Michelle Draper

Sponsor Acknowledgement

Presentations for District Recognition of Service

Presentations for District Recognition of Teams

Presentations for District Recognition of Merit

Closing Remarks

Board Chair Michelle Draper

Reception

Atrium, Centre for Education

Message from the Board of Trustees

For over two decades, the District Recognition Program has shined a well-deserved spotlight on the quiet heroes in our District – those individuals who bring out the very best in our students and in the people they work with.

Tonight, the Board of Trustees is proud to honour a remarkable group of award winners. Congratulations to all of you. While you may have different experiences in supporting teaching and learning, you each share similar qualities that exemplify the true spirit of public education. To your classrooms, you bring an energy and enthusiasm that encourages our learners to realize their potential; to our many offices and school communities, you motivate, support, guide and inspire colleagues to surpass expectations. Your efforts are far reaching – infused with passion, talent and dedication, and make a true difference in the lives of our students and their families.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank our recipients for upholding the tradition of excellence for which our District is known. I wish you continued success and a wonderful, memorable evening.



Michelle Draper
Board Chair

Message from Event Co-Sponsor **Scotiabank**

At Scotiabank, investing in our communities has been a focus for over 185 years. We believe investing in young people is the path to community prosperity.

We aim to support organizations that are committed to helping young people reach their infinite potential. We believe this is an investment in the long-term security, stability and growth of both our communities and our business.

In that spirit, we have been very proud to sponsor the Edmonton Public Schools' District Recognition Program for the past 20 years.

The initiatives undertaken by the district's staff, students, parents and other community members have a positive impact on our children and our community.

We acknowledge all of the nominees for their contributions and achievements. Individually, you are both inspiring and accomplished. Collectively, you are ensuring our future leaders have the necessary skills and resources they need to support their success.

Brian O'Neill
Director
Edmonton and Alberta North
Scotiabank Commercial Banking

Lon Sokalski
Market Lead
Edmonton and Alberta North
Scotiabank Commercial Banking

Edmonton Public Schools benefits greatly from the considerable contributions made by students, staff, parents and community members. Many people volunteer time, talent and energy that not only exceeds our expectations, but also sets an example for others to follow.

These outstanding achievements and important contributions to Edmonton Public Schools are recognized through the annual District Recognition Program. There are three types of District Recognition:

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE honours an individual's outstanding professional and/or volunteer contributions to the life of the school or community. Three recipient categories are recognized each year: parents or community members, secondary students and staff members. Nominations are made based on a number of criteria, such as: quality service, commitment and the relationship of the individual's activities to schooling and/or the enhancement of public education.

RECOGNITION OF TEAMS honours outstanding contributions or achievements made by groups through collaborative efforts. Three recipient categories are recognized each year: groups of parents or community members, groups of secondary students and groups of staff members. Nominations are made based on a number of criteria, such as: significant contribution, the achievement of excellence through teamwork and the relationship of the group's activities to schooling and/or the enhancement of public education.

RECOGNITION OF MERIT honours outstanding achievement of individuals who have demonstrated a standard of excellence in an area of endeavour. Three recipient categories are recognized each year: parents or community members, secondary students and staff members. Nominations are made based on a number of criteria, such as: meritorious, innovative, creative or inspiring achievements, leadership and/or endeavours that have brought distinction to the individual, the school, the community and Edmonton Public Schools.

Recognition of Service

CRITERIA: To recognize the contributions made to the District by parents, community members, secondary students, and staff through professional and volunteer service. Focus is on quality service and significant commitment to the life of the school and/or the education community by an individual.

STAFF

Bob Adamson, Teacher, Balwin School

Bob works tirelessly at Balwin School to create a safe, structured, consistent environment for all students with his calm, fair and compassionate attitude and approach. Committed all hours of the day, Bob has organized and coached a lunchtime running club, coached the softball team and through a sponsorship program has helped Balwin students receive a free bike and helmet.

In his spare time in the past year, Bob learned an intensive new literacy program, which has demanded many extra hours of preparation outside of regular school hours. Armed with this knowledge, the Opportunity teacher has spent hours collaborating with colleagues to develop the best approach to help Balwin students experience growth in reading and writing.

Colleague Christine Allarie says, “Students that were not successful in other environments find success with Bob academically, socially and behaviourally. I am proud and honoured to be his colleague.”

Robert Nanad, Head Custodian, Bessie Nichols

Robert’s house is your house. At least that’s how he makes the more than 1,000 students and staff at Bessie Nichols feel; the school is like his home: a safe, warm and clean environment. Always smiling and welcoming, Robert models kindness to everyone and always puts others first. “Robert’s personality brings great joy to the staff and students,” says teacher Amanda Denys.

Whether he’s helping someone carry boxes from their car or setting up the gymnasium for concerts, he always goes the extra mile and is willing to pitch in at any time.

Students seek out Robert to hear his stories, jokes, learn from him or interview him for the morning announcements. Staff do the same; Robert taught staff how to make spring rolls during a wellness professional development day.

Principal Doug Allen says, “Mr. Nanad shows us all how to be better human beings. We are fortunate to work with him and call him a friend.”

Letitia Carter, Principal, Coronation

While Letitia has been at Coronation for only a short time, she has left an indelible mark among the school community already. She has implemented positive changes to the school—both in the physical updates like having the school completely painted—but also in how the school is operating. Letitia found room in her budget for additional educational assistants and also hired new lunchroom supervisors, which has added diversity and energy to the school.

Creating a warm and welcoming environment is a priority for Letitia, who welcomes students every morning, always makes time to speak with students and parents, and handles difficult situations with compassion, integrity and professionalism.

Parent nominator Heather McIntyre says, “Letitia Carter has gone out of her way to make the education of our children the very best that it can be.”

Suky Bhorla, Custodian, Ellerslie

Suky has been a fixture on the Ellerslie School scene for 27 years and staff couldn’t imagine the school without her.

Always committed, dedicated, professional, friendly and kind, Suky makes time for students, like helping them find lost mittens or shoes. She takes pride in her work and goes above and beyond.

She also treats staff to homemade samosas a couple times a year.

“She is a hard worker with the most caring and genuine heart,” says teacher Melissa Dziendzielowski. “She is a valued member of our school community.”

Sandy Cooke, Educational Assistant, Ellerslie

Sandy has a true gift for working with children who have behaviour challenges: the ability to build trust and provide them with a safe space. He connects with all students at Ellerslie, not just those in his classroom.

He has an innate understanding of the importance of being consistent, having high expectations and helping children understand skills to manage their behaviour. Sandy is dedicated to helping students become contributing citizens in our community and world.

He goes above and beyond the daily job by sharing his love for the arts in the school by designing sets, getting lighting and sound ready, and preparing students for concerts. His enthusiasm is contagious and can often be seen with his elaborate costumes for Touch of Class Day or Crazy Hair Day.

Colleague Valinda Oswald says, “His positive and calming approach with students is very apparent and appreciated by staff and students.”

Elizabeth Chuy, Lunchroom Supervisor, J.A. Fife

While Elizabeth isn’t with J.A. Fife students all day, her time with them as a lunchroom supervisor is impactful. Her kind, calm, gentle nature gives her the ability to form strong relationships with those around her, creating an excellent rapport with students. She is described as kind, positive, diligent, empathetic, persistent, friendly and personable.

Elizabeth is indispensable at the school. She trains staff, creates weekly schedules, troubleshoots, supervises students and chairs weekly lunchroom staff meetings. She is proactive in planning and organizing opportunities to discuss how lunch supervisors can effectively support students during lunch and lunch recess.

Assistant Principal Craig Hughson says, “Elizabeth is a respected and valuable member of our staff who has excelled in her role over the past 12 years.”

Recognition of Service *continued*

Jayne Montgomery, Teacher, Ottewell

As a band teacher and music director at Ottewell for the past 16 years, Jayne has taken numerous students with very basic or no musical knowledge and has turned them into award-winning ensembles. Through her dedication and tremendous teaching skills, she has enriched the lives of countless children.

Jayne, who also plays the flute and is a clinician at many Edmonton Public Schools, has been nominated for an Excellence in Teaching Award three times and was the recent recipient of the Elkhorn Award for Excellence in Music Education.

Passionate about giving students an opportunity, Jayne gives Grade 7 students the opportunity to experiment with instruments until they choose the right one for them, which they perform with in two concerts, two music festivals and a three-day camp.

Former student Torsten Sopczak says, “Ms. Montgomery is an excellent teacher who strives to help her students be the best they possibly can. She creates relationships, which motivates them to maximize their talents. My fellow students and I are better musicians—and people—because of her.”

Deborah Pennyfeather, Teacher, Ottewell

The transition to junior high is a big one. Things are so different from elementary school, and students find themselves going through all kinds of personal changes. Deborah helps make that transition much easier for her students, both academically and socially. Her kind, warm and reassuring presence helps student feel safe and welcome, and puts parents at ease, knowing their children are in good hands.

Deborah's love of theatre is infectious and makes her students want to give their absolute best performances. Ottewell's Grade 9 Shakespeare productions are a highlight of the year as a result.

Her passion for drama extends outside of class time, as Deborah also oversees the drama club. The club puts on a play each year that runs twice: once for students and once for families. She spends countless hours editing, advising, supervising, organizing and preparing students for these performances. She also arranges for students to attend professional productions at the Citadel Theatre—sometimes including opportunities to meet and discuss the craft with performers.

Staff, students and parents all have wonderful things to say about Deborah and the things she's done to improve the school community. According to one parent, “Ms. Pennyfeather encouraged my son and his classmates to be accepting, inclusive and respectful of others, to themselves and to the school community.”

Kim Broomhall, Administrative Assistant, Sakaw

Kim is the first person most visitors will see when they come to Sakaw School. She takes that responsibility very seriously, making sure to set a positive, welcoming tone for everyone who comes to the school.

Her ability to develop rapport and connection with families and visitors alike is remarkable. Kim prides herself on getting to know as many names as possible—even the names of younger siblings who don't attend the school. It's in large part because of Kim that Sakaw feels like a true community that extends far beyond the walls of the school. As the school's population doubled in size in the past few years, Kim's friendly nature and top-notch organizational skills helped ensure a smooth transition for all of the new families who became part of the Sakaw School community.

As a leader in the school, Kim is a role model for students, taking a genuine interest in students and interacting with them in meaningful ways. She also runs an office leaders club to give students real life leadership experience.

Principal Brenda Mulder says, "In addition to ensuring our office operations are efficiently and effectively administered, she's the heart of our school, a rock for staff and parents, the friendly face and voice lifting everyone's spirits, and the shoulder we lean on."

Noel Cartasano, Head Custodian, Scott Robertson

Noel goes above and beyond the call of duty on a daily basis. He sets up special equipment in classrooms, so students with severe special needs can participate in adapted lessons; he clears snow off all the cars in the staff parking lot; and he can often be found singing with students in the hall. On top of that, he's also the school's technology guru, ensuring presentation equipment is set up and supported for school assemblies. During the holiday season, he dresses up like Santa and gives candy canes to the students.

When he's not doing all of those extra tasks, Noel cleans and maintains two sites. Despite all of the work he does, Noel manages to build strong relationships with students and will do anything to help a kid out. As a result, the students gravitate toward Noel and really look up to him. Teacher Allison Barber says, "Watching students light up when they see Noel is spectacular. His very presence would evoke compliance, joy and excitement from the students. Noel is part of the glue that pulls us all together as a tight knit team."

By modelling hard work and a positive attitude, Noel teaches by example. The work experience students from L.Y. Cairns who work with him have amazing things to say about him. One former student says, "He taught me to stay honest, to make wise choices and to work hard." Phyllis Soldan, that student's grandmother says, "I believe Noel is a man of great character, a hard working man with integrity, and who teaches by being a good example. My grandson once said 'I would trust him with my life'."

Recognition of Service *continued*

Deb Noden, Administrative Assistant, Steinhauer

Deb is the kind of person who is always cheerful and enthusiastic, even when work is hectic. She is calm, compassionate and patient. These traits help her make strong connections with students.

One example of the important connections Deb is able to make with students involves a Grade 1 boy who was scared of strangers and strange things. It was hard to get him to come to school and actually come inside. Deb was concerned and was always on top of keeping in contact with staff and the child's family. This student came to depend on Deb's presence in his life. His attendance slowly improved and on the days he was present, he would sneak into the office by crawling on the floor, pop up to say hi to Deb, then would go off to his class. This became his routine.

Her ability to connect with students in such a profound way means that there is almost always at least one student at her desk seeking academic, physical or emotional support. Deb provides this support in a way that helps students develop self-reliance. She also helps students build self-reliance and leadership skills through her Officer Helpers Club, which teaches students how to welcome visitors, answer phone calls and take messages in a courteous and effective manner.

Deb is truly the heart of the school and provides a wealth of knowledge. She can answer just about any question, but those who have worked with her say she could often anticipate questions before they had to ask. Her former principal, Carol Van Kuppeveld says, "She always knew the right questions to ask, was able to find answers, could anticipate my needs, and demonstrated initiative, perseverance and creative problem skills."

Corazon Jularbal, Administrative Assistant, Student Transportation

Corazon is a dedicated worker who is always willing to be flexible with her schedule. If she needs to come in early or leave late to make sure students have a safe ride to and from school, she is willing to do it. Similarly, she'll use her excellent multi-tasking and problem-solving skills to make sure calendar deadlines get met, especially in September, which can be an especially hectic time in Student Transportation.

No matter how overwhelming the workload can be, Corazon always has a happy demeanor. "Her skills not only help with the never ending workflow but also with team morale," says transportation planner Haydn Sanchez Avery.

Corazon works with dozens of schools, including 57 schools with special needs programs. Her co-worker, planner Alison Cheesbrough, says, "These students and parents often need someone to go an extra step to help them because of their circumstances and Cora is always willing and able to do so."

Her exemplary customer service skills extend even to very difficult calls with parents. She handles every call, no matter how difficult, with patience, courtesy, kindness and professionalism; no matter what the request, she will help the family come up with options that work for them.

The thing that really sets Corazon apart is her dedication to the team. She goes out of her way to mentor new staff and is always willing to be a part of big, time-consuming projects. Corazon often volunteers to work on special projects that help meet the department's long term goals, and always maintains a sunny disposition.

PARENT/COMMUNITY

Dianne Walker, Community Volunteer, Brightview

For more than 20 years, four days a week, Dianne Walker has been a bright spot at Brightview School. The long-time volunteer, who can usually be spotted in the Kindergarten classroom, is a warm and welcoming spirit who greets students each and every day.

Through her gentle and caring nature, Dianne listens to and engages in meaningful conversations with each student, ensuring everyone feels valued. Helpful in the classroom, Dianne will do nearly anything: cleaning paintbrushes, helping kids with snacks and working with students one-on-one.

Kindergarten teacher Ellen McLennan says, “My program is greatly enhanced by Dianne’s dedication.”

Principal Lorna Nyitrai says, “Dianne inspires us all with her selfless service to students every day!”

Jessy Nerval, Community Volunteer, Calder

Jessy Nerval is committed to making sure Calder students have a full belly and an enriched school experience. Generous to a fault, from 2014-16, his Seva Food Truck team provided a free lunch for every student once a month that he and his volunteers would prepare and deliver to classrooms. Last school year, he planned an after-school activity once a month, like drumming, dancing, painting and sports, that had an impact on students’ mental, physical and emotional health—once again providing a meal.

For 2017-18 school year, Jessy and his team will again be at Calder School twice a month, providing a meal, activities and motivational guest speakers.

Principal Cathie Bush says, “His ability to connect with students is genuine and has provided students an opportunity to connect positively with young, successful adults.”

Recognition of Service *continued*

Melissa Campbell, Parent Volunteer, Coronation

Melissa is a true leader in the Coronation School community. She's been chair of the school council and parent advisory council for the last three years. Throughout that time, she's made a point of listening to a wide range of views. She is passionate about ensuring everyone is able to have their voice heard and creates opportunities for parents to share input through a combination of surveys and in-person parent meetings.

Her dedication to making all voices heard, even when her views may be different, has earned Melissa the trust and respect of her fellow school parents. This allows her to be an effective liaison between the principal and parents. Principal Letitia Carter says, "Melissa brings new ideas to the table and shares perspective and rationale that supports our District's mission of inspiring student success through high quality learning opportunities, supported by meaningful engagement with students, parents, staff and community."

Recognizing the old truism that it takes a village to raise a child, Melissa celebrates diversity and never misses an opportunity to acknowledge people for their contributions, whether they are school staff or volunteers.

Having dedicated her time and energy to improving the life of the school and community, Melissa is always willing to volunteer. She spearheaded Career Chats, a week-long activity that invites parents from the community come in and share information about their jobs. This connects students with the world of work and strengthens a sense that the school is parent of a wider community.

Whether helping at book fairs, organizing the welcome back barbecue, working casinos, helping clean up after the Christmas concert or supervising at choir concerts, Melissa always helps with a smile on her face. Parent Michelle Young says, "Coronation would not be the same without Melissa."

Anne Kohnen, Community Volunteer, George P. Nicholson

Anne Kohnen started as a grandparent volunteer in classrooms, quickly became an important member of the George P. Nicholson school community. Anne was passionate about her work and would chip in wherever needed, like running the lunch program, helping out in the office whenever necessary, answering phones, welcoming parents, or taking students and guests to classrooms.

Anne truly understood the importance of building relationships and having a healthy work environment and always went out of her way to have a sense of humour and a smile that made everyone feel special.

What was most special about Anne was her ability to show her appreciation for people, to listen and to always have a positive attitude.

Principal Sylvia Becker says, "Anne contributed to the school community for many years, in many ways, and we are so grateful."

Jerry MacIachlan, Community Member, Homesteader

Jerry is the manager at the Belmont Sobeys and he truly believes in supporting the community. After being approached by Homesteader School to support students who were coming to school hungry, Jerry's store began making regular food donations; the store has donated about \$200 worth of supplies every week for many years.

Because of the donations Jerry provides, 20-50 students get breakfast every morning, apples are available at recess and extra food is available to any student who doesn't have lunch. He has also arranged a hot lunch program, that allows students to get a warm, homemade lunch for only \$5.

Jerry also makes food available, at no cost, for Homesteader's annual Christmas dinner and other special events like sports days and Aboriginal day.

With the support of Jerry and Belmont Sobeys, students are well-fed and are able to focus more effectively on their learning. Principal Jennifer Lesko says, "Jerry has gone above and beyond what could be expected in order to support our students."

Heidi Nott, Volunteer, Lendrum

Heidi is a dedicated volunteer who can be counted on to help out in almost any situation. She has supervised field trips, helped struggling readers by working with them one on one, read to classes, helped serve hot lunches and volunteered at Lendrum School's welcome back barbecue.

She's also worked casinos, picked up books for the library, took the lead in organizing the school's annual book fair and even used her own time to collect books for the reading reward program.

In addition to all of these things, Heidi has contributed to school council and the parent advisory committee. Principal Jason Ludwar says, "Heidi should be commended for her perseverance and dedication to making things happen for kids."

Wilson Quan, Community Volunteer, M.E. LaZerte

Wilson is a proud alumnus of M.E. LaZerte and spends much of his time as an excellent role model for students. He is well-known and respected through the entire community for giving back. Assistant principal Marion McIlwraith says, "He gives so much back to our school that is immeasurable in its impact."

He helped two students through the process of setting up the Blue Ribbon project, which raises awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder in first responders, and raises funds for the Glenrose Hospital.

Their efforts led to the First Response to Fashion not-for-profit organization, which Wilson is involved with. With this event, he mentors students through photo shoots, business meetings, networking, sales pitches and more. He also encourages culinary arts students to help cater the fashion show, alongside professional chefs.

Student Joshua Lau says, "What Wilson taught me about public speaking and presentations have proven to be invaluable life skills."

Recognition of Service *continued*

Amanda Taylor-Norton, Parent Volunteer, Mayfield

Amanda always goes above and beyond, making ongoing and significant contributions to the school and community. She has been a committed member of the parent advisory council for the past six years, holding many roles including president and vice-president. She has been the casino chairperson for the last 14 years, and has overseen seven casinos that each raised about \$70,000 to help upgrade technology in the school, fund all field trips and fund an artist-in-residence program.

Her school community colleagues say that she is an excellent communicator and that she is always welcoming to parents who have suggestions or new ideas.

Principal Maureen Winter says, "Our school is a richer, brighter place thanks to Amanda's work."

Peggy (Peg) Young, Community Volunteer, Queen Elizabeth

Queen Elizabeth just wouldn't be the same without Peg. The retired English teacher who taught at Queen Elizabeth for many years, continues to be a fixture on the scene, volunteering her time at the school as a reading coach with English Language Learners in the newcomers program. This program supports more than 200 students who come from intense experiences with trauma, family separation and poverty.

What started out as three mornings a week turned into every day when Peg saw how many students needed extra help. Because of her background and expertise, she is able to individualize instruction to both the speaking and reading abilities of each student. She's able to push through barriers and affect academic and emotional growth. Students who were previously missing classes, have now started to attend more regularly because of her help and support.

English Language Learner teacher Janina Strudwick says, "She has transformed the lives of our students. She has turned these students into blossoming, eager learners with motivation and brighter dreams for the future."

Mary Jean (MJ) Chapelsky, Community Member, Roberta MacAdams

While Mary Jean (MJ) might be a recreation coordinator with the City of Edmonton, to the Roberta MacAdams school family, she's one of them. Recently, her ideas, collaboration and focused activities alongside staff and students, lead to the school publishing a Nature Guide for the Blackmud Creek area. MJ helped organize a book launch for the guide and made suggestions about local companies who could help sponsor the event with food and printing of the guide.

For MJ, collaboration is second nature. She helped the school apply for a community engagement grant and championed the project with the City of Edmonton, providing ideas and support. She also wrote letters of support for grants such as the one Roberta MacAdams just got for \$36,000 for their outdoor classroom currently being worked on.

Principal Karen Keats Whelan says, "MJ spent countless hours at our school, collaborating with staff and students to support and inspire a number of relevant and engaging outdoor initiatives and experiences that had a profound impact on students, families, staff and our larger community. She has left an indelible mark on our school community that will carry forward."

Carol Graham, Community Volunteer, Steinhauer

Carol Graham is a long-time volunteer at Steinhauer School. For the past 13 years, she has visited the school three mornings a week to work one-on-one with at-risk students, who have many learning challenges. She spends her time teaching students reading habits and skills that will help them throughout school and life.

Steinhauer staff says she has a genuine interest in the students she works with and is able to see everyone's potential, motivating them to produce their best work. Her kind and gentle approach helps to build strong bonds with students, who are always excited to work with her.

Teacher Jordan Huberman says, "Carol is always willing to take on any challenges that come her way and is able to approach each student with a mindset that they can be successful."

Georgina Lawrence (and Harlow), Community Volunteer, Strathcona

Georgina and Harlow are a package deal at Strathcona School. And neither of them would have it any other way. It started when Georgina's son attended the school; she would come with her English golden labrador Harlow, a now retired service dog. And although people were drawn to Georgina for her generous spirit and kind heart, they were equally drawn to Harlow's gentle soul and never-ending love of belly rubs. In particular, students in the community living skills/behaviour learning assistance classroom were drawn to Harlow, who brought calm to the classroom.

Out of this experience, the idea for 'exam week dog therapy' was born. Georgina and Harlow spent a full hour before all morning exams and another full hour before afternoon exams in Student Services' 'de-stress zone.' And while Georgina's son has graduated from Strathcona, Georgina and Harlow continue to come for the 10 days during January and June exams. They've made more than 100 visits to the school and have supported countless students by reducing the stress, anxieties and frustration that often accompanies final exams.

Assistant principal Natasha Shewchuk says, "Strathcona is lucky to have a friend like Georgina, who has given selflessly of her time and deep friendship with Harlow."

Recognition of Teams

CRITERIA: *To recognize the contributions made to the District by a group of parents and community members, the achievement of a significant goal through cooperative group efforts by secondary Students, and the excellent contributions made to the District by staff through collaborative group efforts. The focus is on co-operation, participation and excellence in performance by a group of people. Achievement or contribution has brought distinction to the group, the school and/or the District.*

STAFF

Arabic Language Arts Curriculum Development Team

The members of this team are: Sumia Abdul Hafidh, Jan Amundson, Nimeh Awwad, Sue Bell, Cathie Bush, Mazina Chamseddine, Lassaad Chemi, Andrea, Colling, Fatima, Dayoub, Jamal Elassaad, Reem El-Rayes, Sali Elsayed, Iman Fakhani, Ahmed Haymour, Mais Helwah, Mai Hussein, Jennifer Kamal, Constantine Kastrinos, Fadwa Kharbatly, Gisele Khoury, Jaddah Loder, Andrew Lummis, Marilyn Manning, Leila Mansour, Dena Moussa, Dina Nasr, Fatima Rahime, Shaymaa Rahme, Amal Said, Rana Salloum, Samia Sassi, Jim Scott, Hassan Seifeddine, Taher Shayeb Norman Sieweke and Natasha Stempien.

This team of dedicated principals, teachers, consultants, coordinators and support staff have worked diligently to revise the Arabic language arts curriculum and to identify resources to support Alberta Education. This work was diligently completed to a high standard, within a short timeframe and helped lay the foundation for the province's recent announcement that Arabic language programming would be available across the province. Those programs will be based on Edmonton Public Schools curriculum.

Archives and Museum Staff

The members of this team are: Cindy Davis, Lori Clark, Maxine Forrester and Ed Manalo.

As the oldest standing brick building in Alberta, the Archives and Museum needed repairs, in particular to the roof. Faced with this challenge and opportunity, staff at the Archives and Museum pulled together to secure grants to help fund the repairs. Through Cindy's leadership, they created a fundraising campaign called Shake It Up, that gave Edmontonians an opportunity to purchase a cedar shake from the roof. To-date, the team has raised \$1.68 million.

This means that the Archives and Museum can continue to provide enriching living history experiences for students within our District, as well as for those in other jurisdictions. Last year alone, there were 300 curriculum-based programs, provided to 7,500 students and 256 facility bookings to members of the public.

The team also hosted the Newcomer Orientation Workshop for junior and senior high students, and hosted the Board Chair Draper's Equali-Tea, where District leaders led discussions with female senior high students about the importance of being active citizens and having a voice in decisions that impact their communities.

ASD Youth Canada Tournament of the Deaf (YCTD) Committee

This team includes Alberta School for the Deaf staff: Ashlee Beyak, Kevin Colp, Jerick Holberton, Sally Korol, Dallas McEwen, Heather Schneider and Carly Winter.

For four years, this team worked collaboratively in preparation to host a national week-long tournament for the deaf and hard of hearing. This tournament only takes place every two-to-three-years and provides the opportunity for communities to honour culture and traditions, strengthen deaf communities and celebrate the bright future that will be led by deaf youth.

In planning for the tournament, the committee strived to include the whole school throughout the process—from planning to execution. This included: cooking all meals in the Alberta School for the Deaf's new industrial kitchen, creating a competitor's village for athletes, organizing volunteer and work experiences for students, and finding creative ways to fundraise and collect donations and find corporate sponsorships for the event. The committee invited prominent and well-respected deaf or hard of hearing individuals to present at the start of each day, recognizing the importance of one's roots in shaping one's journey.

Principal Sandra Mason says, "They deserve to be recognized for their tireless efforts, innovation, creativity and leadership!"

Communications New Schools Team

The members of this creative team include: Chelsea Armstrong, Patti Didine, Lee Hodgkinson, Willa Kung-Sutton, Cathy MacDonald, Raquel Maurier, Erin McFarlane, Evelyn Pham, Andrea Sands, Adam Snider, Joanne Specken, Jodi Tauber and Ryan Wayne.

In partnership with other central service departments, Communications played an integral part in the ongoing process of opening 11 new schools in the District. Chief Communications Officer Lisa Austin says, "The entire team saw this as an adventure—the chance to leave their mark and be part of an amazing legacy for our District." The team was dedicated to working with colleagues from other departments to help honour the namesakes' legacy by committing to the quality of work being done.

Communications provided support in many ways: the first point of contact with namesakes and namesakes' families (first positive experience for them), writing bios, creating namesake videos (namesake contributions), social media posts (telling stories), designing logos (which involved a great deal of research, developing rationales, consulting with principals and reworking concepts—100 concepts prepared for 11 logos), providing media relations support, helping Infrastructure with attendance area communication pieces and project status updates, communication plans, and planning and executing 11 school opening ceremonies (taking place over 3 months).

Chris Wright, Managing Director of Infrastructure, says, "We are honoured to work with a talented group of communicators who are true partners in education, always keeping students and school communities in the forefront of their minds."

Recognition of Teams *continued*

Coronation School Staff

This team is made up of: Rogelio Carreon, Letitia Carter, Michelle Doiron, Cristina Ionescu, Fran Jensen, Mandy Krahn, Melody Lapp, Riley MacAngus, Ellen McClary, Megan Meyers, Julie Moberg, Ultan Peters, Alysha Pickle, Brittany Segin, Shelley Simonson, Marci Smith, Ted Tessier and Patti Wilcox.

Parent Melissa Campbell says, “The Coronation staff are the epitome of ‘providing a welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning and working environment.’ They are not just educators but also mentors, cheerleaders and advocates for every single student.” Another parent, Dr. Samah Anabousi, says, “They believe in dignity as a means of supporting diversity and inclusion.” They do an excellent job of embracing new families, including same-sex parents, newcomer families and ELL families. All staff are very present on the school grounds both before and after school, connecting with students and families on a daily basis. They also pitch in at the annual family barbecue, invite parents to share their culture with students, and host international fun lunches.

Staff do a great job of incorporating IB principles into everything students do. They provide multiple levels of activity for children to participate and thrive in—from drama and running clubs to cheerleading and recycling clubs—with kids leading the way in developing the clubs.

Principal Carter has been very effective in using the school’s financial resources to provide targeted instruction for all students; the educational assistants are a vital part of students’ success. Mental health has been made a priority with the addition of a psychologist as well.

Parent Heather McIntyre says, “Coronation is a family that draws the very best from each one of its members, and always with an encouraging smile.”

Ellerslie Grade 2 Team

This team consists of: Melissa Dziendzielowski, Shelley Kennedy, Michelle Keylor, Sherri MacLean and Erin Scott-Wilson.

Despite a temporary move to the south campus, parents observed a team who put the needs of students and parents first. They were resilient, patient and professional, welcomed students with smiles, and kept parents well informed throughout the transition process. Despite some challenges, they always ensured students were still learning and enjoying school.

This team is passionate about literacy and believes all students can grow as readers. As a team, they attended the Lucy Calkin’s Reader’s workshop summer institute and implemented the program right away into their already strong language arts program. Their collaborative approach to tiered intervention ensures success for all students.

As of June 2017, 99 per cent of the Grade 2 students showed one year’s growth in their reading. “This is a commendable accomplishment,” says teacher Shelley Kennedy. They are true leaders in education.

Highlands Custodial Team

This team consists of: Elaine Harpe-Ferro, Dahir Hassan and Layne Mathieu.

Educational assistant Sue Kopchia says, “It probably never occurs to visitors how difficult it must be to clean up after hundreds of teenagers, a turtle and some dogs, all the while dodging café tables, couches, a piano and a giant moose. It never occurs to them because our custodial team keeps the school so clean, they make it look effortless.”

Not only do they keep the school exceptionally clean, safe and welcoming, they always go the extra mile to ensure students and staff have what they need. This team takes on their tasks with energy and commitment.

They also model kindness and build relationships with members of the school. Head custodian Layne Mathieu helps serve breakfast every morning. He knows the kids by name, listens to their stories and gives them a positive male role model. Ms. Harpe-Ferro is always in the halls at final bell, wishing kids a safe night and sending them home with a smile. Mr. Hassan is often chatting with kids after their games, offering congratulations or a sympathetic ear if they lost.

J. Percy Page Career Pathways

This team consists of: Holly Gerke, the lead career counselor, and Brian Ross, the work experience coordinator.

They are conscientious, approachable and committed individuals. Assistant Principal Cam Tully says, “They work seamlessly together and collaborate at a such a high level, they make it look like one fluid position.” Holly and Brian pursue and build excellent relationships with community partners on behalf of students. Holly networks with post-secondary institutions and helps connect students to funding assistance, and Brian is legendary for his pursuit of mentorship opportunities for students and has developed numerous relationships with employers. They have transformed the way students conceptualize their futures. Together, they help students hone their skills and interests, and to focus on achievable and challenging goals—students are able to apply their skills in real-world settings, helping them to link classroom learning to how it applies to their futures.

They oversee Plan your Path at Page day, which takes hundreds of hours, coordinating a full-day field trip for 800 students visiting 30 local businesses, agencies and organizations. Assistant Principal Cam Tully says, “Imagine organizing 37 simultaneous field trips, with staggering departure and arrival times, buses circling like planes at O’Hare airport, processing paperwork, and organizing lunches and thank you gifts. Holly and Brian are energized by this.”

Department head of student services, Shelley Vettese-Baert says, “The programs develop optimism and self-sufficiency, and reinforce students’ roles as leaders in their own education.”

Recognition of Teams *continued*

Kenilworth Custodial Team

This team includes: Nina Caro, Rosella Fernandez and Ganesh Paul.

Under the leadership of head custodian Ganesh Paul, this team keeps the school spotless, well maintained and welcoming. During the day, Ganesh takes the time to build relationships with students and staff. He is patient and always willing to help, with a smile. Ganesh is flexible and is a good problem solver with day to day operations. After the students have gone home, they are always willing to let students, parents and staff back into the building to recover forgotten homework or lost keys.

As a team, they work tirelessly to ensure the school is a place staff and students alike want to be in and feel safe in. They have relentless work ethic and professionalism, and attend to even the smallest details like emptying three-hole punches. They are also always willing to accommodate last minute requests.

Art teacher Jan Brown says, “My room is cleaned well everyday and I’m never made to feel I am imposing or making their lives more difficult (even though I know the paint spatter and paper clutter make things more difficult).”

M.E. LaZerte Front Office Team

This team is made up of: Franca Hebrada, Susan Ketteringham and Dani Litchfield. Staff, students and families describe them as cheerful, positive, respectful, dependable, meticulous, calm, innovative and adaptable.

Teacher Darrell Sumyk says, “I am thoroughly amazed at the quantity and quality of their day-to-day undertakings. I firmly believe these ladies are the heart and soul of the school.” Their duties are vast and diverse, and they all complete them with dedication, efficiency and professionalism.

This is one of the most culturally diverse schools and every day is truly unique. They have excellent communications skills and operate as a cohesive unit—dealing with different staff groups, students, families, community members and various visitors—and go above and beyond when dealing with others and with what is required.

They all embody what it means to be leaders in the school. “They truly live the belief that their role is to facilitate and build better relationships with the students and staff they serve and to members of the community,” says former M.E. LaZerte teacher Heather Quinn. Regardless of circumstances and unexpected events, they pull together with the uncanny ability of knowing what to do.

Major General Griesbach Custodial Team

This team is made up of: Bien Nguyen, Pedro Fuentebella, Luisa Lourenco and Pramella Ram.

Staff members say they feel so lucky to have them as colleagues and friends, and students love and respect them. Each member of this team has a unique way of connecting with people and making them feel valued, wanted and loved. They keep the school immaculately clean, and are dedicated and proud of their work. They mentor and help train other custodial staff.

They are also trusted adults to students. During the day, Bien greets kids with his infectious smile and jokes. He will invite students to help him if he senses they need some support or friendship. At recess, you can see him take little breaks to play a quick game of tag or pass the soccer ball. In the morning, students jump up to give him high fives. He always brings a smile to students' faces. In the winter, he can be seen doing things like helping parents push their cars that are stuck in the snow, blowing snow off staff vehicles, or getting to school early so classes are warmed up in time for students and staff. June, Luisa and Pram always greet students, staff and families with genuine kindness. They work so hard to get the school ready for a new day. They also make a point of checking in with staff to see how life is going, both inside and outside the school.

The whole team works hard to build positive relationships with parents as well. They are always ready to jump in and go the extra mile to help with concerts, barbecues or fundraising events. They also make a point of attending school concerts, carnivals and other school events. Whether it was coming in early or staying late, their presence was felt by students, families and other staff. Parent Amanda Cole says, "I cannot stress enough that MGG would not be what it is without this wonderful custodial team."

Nellie Carlson Admin Team

The team members are: Assistant Principal Tara Copeman, and curriculum coordinators Rachel Radmanovich and Kristopher Skinner.

Opening the new school last year was a hectic and time sensitive process. They worked through the summer, weekends and into evenings to make sure staff were supported and the school was ready to open the doors for its first September classes. They organized everything from scheduling and parent meetings to text book purchases and technology arrangements. Principal Henry Madsen says, "Their focus for every decision was what would be best for student learning."

They built a school culture around a focus on student learning, relationships and community. Each of the team leaders took responsibility for a divisional collaborative team, ensuring teams were working interdependently, creating achievement goals, and holding each other mutually accountable for those goals. Teacher teams learned how to gather baseline data, set goals, develop strategies and gather data around success. To further develop a culture of learning, they ensured the frequent use of formative assessment to inform next steps in both teaching and student interventions. This team also provided monthly professional development to teachers around numeracy and reading.

To build relationships and a sense of community, they created eight 'cub' teams to engage in friendly competitions, they organized assemblies to celebrate community involvement, and worked closely with the school councils. School council chair Jamila Moloo says, "They have fostered an environment where the students are encouraged to explore, create, achieve and excel."

Recognition of Teams *continued*

Nellie Carlson Junior High Team

The teachers that make up this team are: Katrina Field, Kym Francis and Jaime Lees.

When the school opened last year, they made students who came from dozens of other schools, feel welcomed and excited to start fresh and enjoy their new school. Many of these students were struggling academically, especially the Grade 9 students, many who had behavioural issues. They knew they had to build trust and relationships with students. They modelled collaboration across all facets of school life.

One of the first things they did was to engage all students in conversations and input around what they thought was important to make Nellie Carlson a great place to learn and work together. They also created leadership opportunities that were supportive and low risk, and they started a 'good friend' program where adults in the school took interest in two higher risk students. They even framed a photo of each of the 75 students with the student's motto and displayed them on a wall. Each week, they profiled three students at staff meetings so the elementary teachers could get to know them and connect better as well.

Many students who said they hated school when they first started at Nellie Carlson, ended up speaking at Grade 9 graduation and were saying things like, "This has probably been the best school year I've had" and "I've never had such good teachers that would do anything to help us succeed."

Principal Henry Madsen says, "It's hard to explain, but impossible to exaggerate, the level of commitment and caring of these three teachers."

Nellie Carlson Kindergarten Team

The teachers on this team are: Alison McGhee and Monica Donadt-Milne.

One of the challenges of teaching kindergarten is not having insight into what kind of learning needs will walk through your doors. In a brand new school, this is compounded by not even knowing any of the siblings or families as a reference point. They had over 80 students and through extensive collaboration, dedication and passion, they each met the needs of their entire class.

They did individual assessments to create a starting point. They also created portfolios that focused on who the students were as individuals and what characteristics made them unique and cared for. Their classrooms were set up as mini-communities and focused on providing a triangulated support team of parent, teacher and student. Curriculum coordinator Kristopher Skinner says, "They believed in the ability of all of their students to show growth, and they tailored their instruction to each individual." They modified student supports where necessary, met high expectations and created a sturdy foundation for students heading into Grade 1.

They also instilled a sense of giving back to the community by having students do things like distributing cards to neighbours at Christmas.

New School Opening Team, various central departments

This team is made up of various central departments and selected department leads, and has been nominated by the principals of the 11 new schools. This team is: Communications (Erin McFarlane), District Technology (Aaron Muller), District Support Services (Laurie Barnstable), Finance (Donna Castelo-Cruz and Zlatica Radovic), Human Resources (Trish Kolotyluk), Inclusive Learning (Leona Morrison) and Infrastructure (Terri Gosine).

Terri Gosine, Director of the Project Management Office, and an extensive network of staff took on the monumental task of planning for, and executing the opening of, 11 new schools in our District, something that has not happened in our District for more than 100 years. This team went above and beyond expectations to make this an extremely successful endeavour. “This achievement was only made possible by the ongoing cooperation, clear communication, enthusiastic participation and excellent performance of a committed team working together to achieve a common goal,” says principal Bob Carter.

This multi-year project has culminated in notable distinction to Edmonton Public Schools, and has contributed to public education through the creation of 11 excellent new learning spaces. “The entire team has lived the District’s cornerstone values of accountability, collaboration, equity and integrity,” says Principal Ron Thompson. Principal Brad Mamchur says, “If not for their ability to build early relationships and trust, to be skillful, intelligent communicators, to possess ever positive attitudes, and provide support and encouragement, we would not be where we are today. Team members modeled these characteristics and continue to be commonplace as we move forward.”

Pre-Kindergarten Rebranding Team

This duo is: Chelsea Armstrong from Communications and Natalie Prytuluk from Inclusive Learning.

This past September, the District launched a new model that combined the best parts of early education and early learning programs, which would ultimately help the District help more children while supporting their unique learning needs.

Before that launch, staff and parents alike didn’t really know the difference between the two programs. To start fresh and signal the start of a brand new program, and help everyone understand the benefits of the new approach, a rebranding process started.

Over a two year period, Chelsea and Natalie spearheaded multiple stakeholder consultations to learn more about the impact and value early year programming had on families. They analyzed feedback, worked through various channels and levels of feedback to develop the new Pre-Kindergarten model. Then began the process of reintroducing the program. They developed numerous communication materials like a video, information sheets, checklists for schools and website content.

Communications Manager Janet McNally says, “This team led with patience, kindness and an admirable commitment to collaboration.”

Recognition of Teams *continued*

Strathcona AP Capstone Program Team

The teacher members of this team are: Greg Henkelman and Burke Sperling.

Greg Henkelman and Burke Sperling are each worthy of the title ‘master teacher’ for their work in establishing the College Board Advanced Placement Capstone course at Strathcona School. The course invites students to integrate their knowledge of various subjects through a two-year academic skills-based course, which gives them analytical and research skills.

Through their vision and work, the Strathcona course has gained credibility among universities. High school students who complete the course successfully are seen to have accomplished something equivalent to multiple years of university. As part of the pilot, Strathcona School was one of 17 schools selected worldwide to launch the course through The College Board and Cambridge University—the only Canadian school accorded this distinction.

Greg and Burke nurtured their students’ intelligence, natural academic abilities and brought this fledgling program to students throughout their high school experience.

Assistant principal T.J. Davey says, “These pioneer teachers are risk-takers whose daring and efforts have paid dividends; they have enhanced the image and reputation of Edmonton Public Schools as they search for exceptional ability in our classrooms through the prestigious AP Capstone course.”

DISTRICT STAFF/COMMUNITY

Balwin Literacy Project

This team consists of: Bob Adamson, Tinu Ajanaku, Christine Allarie, Laurie Baker, Chanelle Cluett-Alstad, Lauren Dwyer, Satah Ferrante, Joanne Heckbert, Angus Hossack, Trish Mosby, Rebecca Robins and Patti St. Pierre.

Alongside a literacy coach, this team put in many extra hours to learn a new literacy program, and worked on developing new lessons and resources with a focus on phonemic (identifying and manipulating units of oral language) and phonological (ability to focus on and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words) awareness.

This team was instrumental in ensuring all staff had opportunities to collaborate and share instructional strategies to enhance the learning for all members in the school community. “Their work created a monumental shift in practice across the whole school,” says Assistant Principal Andy Connelly. Evidence of increased reading grade levels of achievement and engagement have been seen. Staff have been exposed to, and talk about, lessons focused on creativity and collaboration. Staff have also had the opportunity to showcase their professional development and the important work they are doing.

This team has been inspirational. This team has established a community of confident learners of both students and staff. Parents and guardians also provided feedback about how students seemed more engaged and more excited about school.

PARENT/COMMUNITY

Canadian Arab Friendship Association (CAFA)

Under the leadership of CAFA president Yazan Haymour, this association has worked tirelessly with parents and community members to promote the District Arabic bilingual program, and Arabic language and culture programs.

Mr. Haymour worked closely with District staff to ensure effective communications and support for the Arabic bilingual program were in place. He also worked with Alberta Education to promote our District's programs and facilitated the movement of our District's locally developed Arabic language arts course to become a provincial program of studies.

In addition to his advocacy support, CAFA provided some funding to District Arabic language schools for resources and other key supports. Through Mr. Haymour's leadership, CAFA has provided invaluable support to Edmonton Public Schools.

Delton's All in for Youth Team

The team members are: Evan Dotinga, Tamara Kelly, Nancy Martin, Teagan Mitchell, Natalie Steffl, Andrea Thrall and Kun Wang.

These individuals work with Delton's most at risk students that are referred to them; they provide them with supports and access to services that can remove the barriers to learning. Approximately 300 of the 430 students at the school were supported by this team.

Principal Errol Johnson says, "These individuals possess the magical mixture of enthusiasm and optimism, which serve to empower staff, students and their families."

Each of them demonstrates genuine caring, respect and excellence in their unique and important roles. They encourage students to do their best, offer encouragement to get to school on time (sometimes even picking them up from home), to aim for academic success (working with students in classrooms), and help ensure their emotional (counselling), physical (after school programming) and basic needs (like snacks and lunches) are met.

Assistant Principal Dao Haddad says, "This entire team has become part of our family."

Delwood Parent Support Association (DPSA)

The members of this team are: Shannon Armstrong, Beth Baillie, Jane Baker, Colin Bishop, Michelle Bott, Michael Brisbois, Ella Clarke, Erin Hunt, Amanda Kucher, Cassandra Rose, Kathleen Ruelling, Patricia Sakulich and Darlene Tutak.

These reliable volunteers supported the school in three important ways. First, they provided financial support for many activities including the school's 50th anniversary celebration (funding the Legacy Project and creation of beautiful glass tile mosaic in the courtyard), technology, field trips, student citizenship certificates, the annual carnival, student enrichment clubs, musical instruments, a presentation by the Edmonton Opera and farewell t-shirts to Grade 6 students. They work bingos, casinos and host other fundraisers. They also greatly contributed to school spirit by helping in classrooms and with activities like hot lunches or concerts—they always had a positive presence. Finally, they provided valuable feedback on school policies and procedures.

Each year, they allocate approximately \$40,000 to enrich the experience of Delwood students. Principal Jack Geldart says, "The commitment of this core group to making the school a better place is an ongoing source of pride."

Recognition of Teams *continued*

Highlands Parent Society

This team is made up of: Candace Makowichuk, Brenda McNicoll, Tracy Potter-MacSwain, Tracy Robinson and Susan Stewart.

This team functions as a tight-knit group to support the school. They worked hard to get in good standing with Alberta Gaming and began working bingos and casinos, among other fundraisers like bottle drives and pop-up galleries. In just one year, they increased the society's bank balance from \$1,500 to just over \$100,000. The new funding has created many new opportunities and resources for Highlands, like guest artists, field trips, technology, arts equipment, and kitchen equipment, food and volunteers to support the breakfast and hot lunch programs.

Principal Brad Burns says, "Their desire to create a welcoming, caring culture in the school is evident in their support of community and school activities."

Aside from all the fundraising they do, they do other activities like hosting coffee mornings to connect with parents, creating a welcoming environment for all parents, not just the ones involved in formal parent meetings; it's one small way to break down barriers. They have been tireless in their support of the arts, athletics and staff.

"The scope of their involvement has immensely impacted our school culture and sense of well-being," says Assistant Principal Mary Ann Dobson.

Kildare After School Program Coordinators

The members of this team are: Kristy Hamm, Bonnie Leong, Lucy Wong Mah, Michelle Ronquillo and Jeannie Yung.

For the past two years, these ladies have spent countless hours coordinating the registration of over 100 students twice a year, in after school classes.

They worked with community partners to find instructors for numerous classes such as Lego robotics, badminton, Chinese dance, Erhu, Chinese art and Tai Chi. They also managed fees, coordinated payment of instructors, collaborated with school administration and community partners around performances, and managed an email account they communicated with parents through.

Students were given the opportunity to perform at the first ever Oil Kings' Mandarin schools night, at Chinese New Years events as well as other events and shows. students were able to deepen their understanding of Chinese culture while building relationships with community members and each other.

Principal Cheryl Belyea says, "They were passionate about keeping Chinese culture alive at Kildare. Staff and students at Kildare are incredibly grateful for the commitment and drive of this small team of volunteers."

Kildare KISS Team

The members of Kildare's Parent Support Society team are: Susanne Chew, Dennis Cho, Florance Cho, Bonnie Leong, Dianne Loh, Jennifer Lowe, Henry Ma, Monica Mah, YC Morrissey, Eva Poon, Val Pui, Michelle Ronquillo, Myann Tsen, Lucy Wong Mah, Lynda Wong-Mah and Jeannie Yung.

Principal Cheryl Belyea says, "The number of volunteer hours they commit to in our school is so great, we have to remind others they are not actual employed staff."

They work collaboratively with school staff and administration to ensure time and money are invested in a way that truly impacts students, and provides equal access to learning for all students through field trips, learning resources and tools, guest presenters, and numerous after school programs.

Whether they're organizing a casino, selling grocery cards, organizing and funding a full Thanksgiving dinner for over 400 students in the Mandarin Bilingual program, or organizing volunteers to help serve a noodle lunch to over 500 students, they always exceed expectations and do so with humility.

These extremely dedicated parents play a critical role in supporting Kildare students. Their driving force is always what's best for kids.

Mayfield Rotary Club, Brightview School

Jaima Geller and Bill Lywood are the representatives being acknowledged for their support and service to Brightview School.

Every year, they provide vulnerable students with a hot turkey luncheon, visit from Santa and treat bags to begin holiday celebrations. They contribute to student well-being by providing funds for a weekly hot lunch program at the school. To celebrate the end of the school year, they organize a free barbecue and field day. Many Rotarians have volunteered their time and generosity as fundraisers to support the school celebrations. They have even co-authored grant applications with the parent council to improve the kitchen in support of the Kids in the Kitchen program.

The Rotarians also support students' academic growth by donating technology for students and supporting students in classrooms with daily reading help. Their help with reading significantly improves students' success as readers and changes the way children view reading. They have also been known to help with art projects or as supervisors on field trips.

Principal Lorna Nyitrai says, "Whenever they are called upon, they show up and make our school a better place! They not only inspire many people, they change lives with every action they take!"

Recognition of Teams *continued*

Meadowlark School Council

This team consists of: Henry Chen, Harvey Chiew, Selena Chow-Erskine, Kim Dineen, Ailsa Flynn, Hank Hoeven, Jasmine Hoeven, Kim Hunter Lee, Monica Kehrig, Laura Lam, Wenli Mao, Chelsea Miketon, Kathy Poon, Peter Poon, Chris Riecks, Darcie Tessari and Michelle Yeung.

Principal Heather Langenhahn says, “These vibrant and engaged parents and community members work tirelessly to support our students, staff and programs to ensure we are one team.” They do a great job building and growing relationships within the entire Meadowlark community.

This team has enhanced student success in various ways. They have hosted various events like meet the teacher barbecue and the Chinese New Year luncheon, covered bus fees for each classroom’s field trip each year, secure different artists in residence, and have funded Chinese folk instruments so students can learn Chinese music and culture. They even started the Chinese music club, whose members perform in the school and various communities. For staff, they funded some staff to attend training in the Rainbows Program, which helps students learn how to cope with loss. They also have been instrumental in working with the community league to build a new playground in the community.

The council has a culture of values and ethics, and are very supportive of the school’s vision. They always perform their tasks with passion, professionalism and enthusiasm.

Steele Heights Baptist Church

The members of this team are: Arnold Collins, Nicola Coulstring, Ernie Ewasiuk, Ben Kroeker, Antoinette Moore, Darren Platt, Jessica Platt and Ken Witwicki.

They have an ongoing and lengthy history of supporting the students at Steele Heights. They started an after school drop in program a few days a week, where students are provided a safe and warm space to play games, get a bite to eat and have either hot or cold drink depending on the season. The best part, the idea came from students skateboarding on the church’s steps and railings. Instead of chasing them away, the students were invited in for hot chocolate and a listening ear. The start of this program seems to have had a direct correlation to a decrease in after school fights in the area. Acting for Principal Dale Cooper says, “I truly believe that the program also had a positive impact within our school walls as well.”

The church also supported many of the school’s families, even when they weren’t members of the congregation. One example is how they helped a grandparent support their grandson who had suffered personal loss, was grieving and did not want to go to school. The church provided positive male role models and got him involved with a father and kids who would just do things like carpentry in their garage. The impact was tremendous.

The members also meet regularly with the school to see if there are other ways they can help. They even put on a meal for staff at the end of the year.

Steele Heights School is incredibly grateful for the support they show to the school’s families. They have gone above and beyond.

Victoria School Arts Society

The members of the society are: Shelley Erikson, Katie Gelasco, Dulcie Meathetingham, Jackie Scott and Erin Waye.

The society has a positive impact by fundraising for and purchasing items that enrich the learning experiences of all students. Casino fundraising provides a significant amount of money to purchase items the school would not otherwise be able to buy. The casinos are so well supported that there are often more volunteers than necessary. A few of the many things the school has been afforded as a result of their dedication are: tower gardens that enable elementary students to grow and care for plants, frames so student artwork can be showcased around the school, hand drums for the music and dance programs, a mixing board for the vocal jazz ensembles, various theatre enhancements like LAV mics and a start drop lighting system, and a 3D printer to engage students in art, design, science and engineering.

Assistant Principal Randy Witte says, “They are also a key factor in the creation of the positive, supportive and friendly school culture.” They assumed the role of organizing and staffing all the front house needs for Victoria’s busy performance season—they organized over 100 volunteers to work at over 25 performance shows. Taking over this role has alleviated the pressure of staff having to oversee everything from taking tickets and handing out programs, to seating patrons and troubleshooting. On top of alleviating pressure, stronger relationships are built amongst volunteers and parents who spend time together in the school.

PARENT/COMMUNITY/DISTRICT STAFF

SEATS (South Edmonton Arts & Theatre Society), Lillian Osborne School

The following individuals make up this team: Rob Agostinis, Austin Blocksidge, Sue Blocksidge, Janet Borbely, Tim Cartmell, Janet Cosens, Kieran, Fitzgerald, David Hancock, Janet Hancock, Sherri Henderson, Harold Hornig, Margot Hrynyk, Lea MacKenzie, David McNally, Paula Millham, Marlize Morris, Patricia Neiberding, Emma Reyes, Carol Ritter, Heather Taschuk, Davey Thompson, Brendan Tonn, Sue Trigg and Caro Vanrensburg.

Terri Gosine says, “This dedicated group realized a need in the community, and with a passion for the arts, they made a dream a reality.” Three years ago, this committee began fundraising to build a state of the art theatre attached to Lillian Osborne. They planned and orchestrated numerous events—from benefit concerts to art and wine nights. They also went door to door soliciting support, wrote grant proposals and approached larger businesses with sponsorship proposals. Many hours continue to be dedicated to realizing the completion of the theatre project. To date, this team has raised an astounding \$1.5 million.

The theatre is set to be one of the very first venues of its kind in the city. They even had the forethought to have retractable seats installed so when the 300 seats are being used, the space can be used for diverse community functions. This committee has been able to bring community together. The theatre will not only benefit students from Lillian Osborne, but also the entire performing arts community in south Edmonton.

“Their efforts are admirable, appreciated and truly legendary,” says Department Head of Creative Arts, Kerri Neitsch.

Recognition of Teams *continued*

STUDENTS

Strathcona Initiative Alumni Volunteers

The team is represented by: Renee Anielski, Collin Buchanan, Kyra Cusveller, Roger Goulden, Matthew Jacula, Jeremy Johnson-Silvers, Steven Lin, Katie MacLean, Jeremy Maier, Maya Morrison, Samantha Tewitz, Josh Thompson and Tom Yonge.

Student Activities Advisor Jane Grant says, “These alumni continue to stay passionate about the work Scona does to support local and global causes.”

These team members selflessly and enthusiastically gave so much of their time, effort and passion into helping staff and leadership students make the 24-hour bikeathon a well run and successful event. They did everything from registering over 1,000 students, helping with set-up and tear-down, staying up and supervising into the early morning hours, kept the help desk running, helped secure sponsorship opportunities, mentored students in photo and video production, and counted funds raised (over \$1.5 million in past 10 years).

“Alumni support to Strathcona activities creates a strong community of caring,” says Assistant Principal Narindar Riari.

STUDENTS/DISTRICT STAFF

Jasper Place Horticulture Team

This team is made up of: teachers Elwin Worobec and Dave Keymer, educational assistant Sally Carr, and students Karolina Bandowski, Chev Bird, Dyhaine Campbell, Hope Charles, Chun-Hao Chen, Koby Dixon, Carl Groten, Jacob Harder, Angel Harris, Jackson Hatton, Violet Hohne, Braiden Hopkins, Cassie Kyme, Kyle Morris, Fantasy Tiedemann and Brandon Tran.

Mr. Worobec leads the horticulture team with the Knowledge and Employability students. This team has created beautiful green spaces, community alliances, staff interaction and collaboration, and student achievement and empowerment. The interaction and networking benefits students who struggle with communications, confidence and social skills—they experience independence as they physically navigate the school, confidence as they communicate with staff, partners and collaborators, pride as they beautify the school community, and generosity as they give back to the school community. Nancy Davis in student services says, “True learning takes place daily for these students because the connection to the real world is part of all they do.”

The horticulture team has collaborated with departments like construction and culinary to create structures like raised container beds or used home grown produce in cooking classes and meal service. They even created an annual community plant sale in the spring—plants were started and cared for by students, then sold to members of Jasper Place and the surrounding community. These students experience pride in their accomplishments and have been given the gift of developing workplace readiness skills.

STUDENTS/DISTRICT STAFF/PARENT/COMMUNITY

Speech and Debate Club, Lillian Osborne

This team is made up of: teachers Linda Aschenbrenner and Angela Bosscha, external coach Ali Cheri, parent Shairose Lalani, and students Ayaan Ahmed, Suhkman Baggu, Ali Cheri, Tanraj Dhillon, Ibrahim Elmallah, Yifan Hu, Cam Jan, Sarena Lalani, Irene Lu, Austin Redmond, Anand Unithan, Kanika Vashist, Neha Vashist, Lucy Vueglers and Savannah Yu.

Led by Linda Aschenbrenner, this club worked incredibly hard to represent the school with dedication, passion and integrity. They spent countless hours preparing and earned a respectable reputation among other local and provincial debate teams. Coaches worked hard to ensure the team had access to the best available resources and opportunities.

The team's hard work showed in the many proud achievements of several members including: two team members advancing to nationals, one student representing Alberta, one team member winning a bronze medal and one winning the best delegate award.

Coach Linda Aschenbrenner is dedicated to expanding and improving the debate community. This team's passion for debate has inspired other students to take risks and

Recognition of Merit

CRITERIA: To recognize the outstanding achievement or exemplary performance of an individual parent or community member, secondary student or district staff member who has demonstrated a standard of excellence in an area of endeavour. Focus is on achievements, leadership or contributions that are meritorious, innovative, creative, or inspiring and have brought distinction to the individual, the school, the community and the District.

STAFF

Nick Reilly, Teacher, Balwin School

Nick teaches multiple program areas including physical education, technology, project based learning, and basketball Career and Technology Foundation (CTF) sport for life. He is a caring and dynamic leader in the school, the catchment and the District. Principal Christina Jones says, "Nick's presence is a gift to the staff and students at Balwin School."

He is an innovative and creative teacher who has implemented numerous new and unique programs.

He developed Project Monday for the first period of every Monday. Grades 5-9 students engage in solving challenges that require creativity, problem solving and use of cross-curricular competencies (involving challenges like filtering contaminated water or ending poverty). His coordination of this program has led to students establishing community service programs that include recycling, shovelling snow in the community or raising funds to help community families. Assistant principal Andy Connelly says, "Nick's work on the Project Monday program led to high levels of student engagement. Student attendance on Monday mornings increased and tardiness decreased by significant levels. Numerous staff also asked to be assigned to participate as they see the direct benefits to engaging with the students in their classrooms."

He effectively planned and implemented an educational technology framework, with an emphasis on evergreening and ensuring accessible technology for all. He also developed ground-breaking courses in 3D printing, programming, cosmetology, board games and Hoops for Life (basketball based physical literacy course). He models and works tirelessly to promote physical literacy and a healthy lifestyle. He is the school's athletic director, coaches multiple teams (basketball, track and field, softball and badminton), and is a trained District physical literacy facilitator.

"Nick is a master at motivating students and individualizing student needs," says Principal Jones. He also champions professional development, continually implementing new knowledge and skills into his teaching practice.

Rodney French, Principal, Belgravia School

“Principal French has created a climate focused around kindness, compassion, acceptance and a true vision of forward-thinking for the community,” says teacher Lori Nolt. “His level of engagement with the children and families is like nothing else I have ever witnessed. His ability to interact with children is remarkable and admirable.”

Principal French knows every student and parent by name. He tries to greet children each day and connect on a personal level. Every day he is out on the playground before school, at recess, lunch breaks and after school, connecting with families. Mr. French is known to the children for his intense recess soccer matches, hanging upside down or doing a somersault on the monkey bars. The Grade 6 class keeps an eye on their door in case Mr. French happens to do cartwheels in the hallway. He values the importance of physical fitness and active children, so he started the Belgravia mountain biking club and coached both the cross-country club and indoor relay teams. He also attends many field trips. Students have the utmost respect for him and aim to please.

He is also a trusted, sincere and engaged leader for his staff. He supports and guides staff through anything they are facing, is in tune with staff and their workloads, and is a model of work life balance. He encourages staff to pursue leadership, professional and personal development

He understands and respects that each student learns in their own way, is supportive of varied ways of delivering the curriculum and trusts the staff to make decisions for their delivery. A parent of a student with anxiety and ADHD says he has supported her and her daughter. If her daughter needs a physical break, Mr. French will drop everything to do and activity with her to help her cope with the day. He’s willing to do this for any child. He even added some stationary bikes with stand up desks to classrooms so children have the opportunity for a movement break without leaving the class. He finds a positive solution for everything.

Parent Heidi Cheung says, “Mr. French possesses a selfless nature that brings everyone around him united towards the common goal of doing what’s best for the children.”

Barry Svederus, Custodian, Clara Tyner School

Principal Connie Spasiuk says, “Barry provides a welcoming, high quality learning and working environment. He keeps the environment to exemplary standards and always takes the time to talk with children and get to know their interests. Students respect him and often seek him out for support.”

He implemented the Golden Garbage Can Award where each month, he awards it to the one class in Division 1 and one in Division 2; this encourages students to give extra care and attention to cleaning up after themselves. Each day, he also leaves ‘cleanliness certificates’ in the rooms for things like tidy boot racks and chairs pushed in. He’ll leave messages or riddles on the whiteboard congratulating them or suggesting what they should work on, often written in another language so they have to figure it out. Barry reads to classes during READ In Week and is often a guest speaker in classrooms to talk about his specialized knowledge of milk production and delivery. He is always smiling and encouraging students.

He has also built strong relationships with his colleagues. He is willing to support a co-worker and always with a positive attitude. He is patient with requests and readily available to ensure teachers have the tools they need for successful instruction. He is also always willing to help parents with evening events like family barbecues and dances, helping with things like set up and teardown.

Recognition of Merit *continued*

Susan (Sue) Pederson, Administrative Assistant, Delton School

Sue's work ethic and team focus is second to none. Principal Errol Johnson says, "She is relentless when it comes to helping others. She approaches her assignments with genuine enthusiasm and is the most optimistic person I have had the opportunity to work with. She is highly respected and can be counted on to resolve problems and help out where she can. Her cheerful optimism is empowering to everyone."

Not only does she work tirelessly to complete work in a timely manner, she also often takes on tasks outside her daily tasks. Sue has been a huge support for administrative teams throughout the city centre catchment; she offers wisdom, support and expertise to many others. She also helps families outside school hours, like being available on a Saturday to ensure delivery of holiday hampers to Delton families.

She has the ability to treat students, staff, parents and community members with respect, compassion and dignity. She develops meaningful relationships with everyone and creates a positive and welcoming environment. She is the only administrative support in an office that supports 430 of the city's most vulnerable students, yet she gets to know the background of these students and is an advocate for many students and families. She has assisted many by providing food, clothing or helping where there is another need.

District leaders who have worked with Sue previously say things like: "I continue to contact Sue for advice and support. She is a colleague I have great respect and admiration for." "Sue exemplifies commitment to the students and families at Delton." "I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to get to know and work with Mrs. Pederson. She is a true role model with a sincere commitment to excellence."

Jaki Campeau, Teacher, Grovenor School

Jaki is a dedicated and personable leader who acts with confidence and clarity. She has the unique ability to make students feel valued and capable, regardless of their capabilities. She truly cares and that is evident in everything she does.

She sets up individualized education plans and is excellent working with all the different areas that provide support for the children in the program. Students have been guided through developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn various skills which help set them up for success. She truly understands and believes in each of her special needs students.

Parents of a student with a hearing impairment said they have seen their son make marked gains in both his speech/language skills and confidence. She has created a warm and inviting classroom with an open door policy for parents. She always has time for a parent who is struggling with their child, providing suggestions for available resources or just providing friendly reassurance. Parents say her advice and input is securely grounded in a tone of integrity and mutual respect.

Parents say things like: "I have seen positive changes in my son beyond anything we expected. She has gone above and beyond on so many occasions and we, and our son, are so fortunate that he was able to begin his educational journey with her." Another parent of a severely autistic boy explained how Jaki helped them through a very tough time when they learned of their son's diagnosis. Right from the start, she demonstrated patience and affection for their son. Their son experienced progress in listening, comprehension, speaking and socializing. The whole time, Jaki kept parents informed of his development and became an integral part of their lives.

Janice Gervais, Administrative Assistant, Kenilworth School

Janice's work is exemplary and she gives careful consideration to the human element at all time. Teacher Mike Tomkins says, her professionalism is exceeded only by her heart and good nature (like quietly making sure kids have food if they need it). She is always positive, calm, comforting and optimistic. She is often the voice and face of the school. Having her as the first point of contact is reassuring to staff. Teacher Candace Willis says, "I always know visitors will be treated with respect, compassion and confidentiality."

Janice goes above and beyond to keep the office running smoothly and makes it look effortless—always with a sense of humour and smile on her face. "Janice is instrumental in not only the efficient day to day operations, but also in establishing the positive, inclusive and welcoming atmosphere of our school," says teacher Fred Antoniwi. Janice is the Swiss army knife of Kenilworth. On any given day she acts as everything from an accountant and telephone operator, to data analyst and ice pack distributor.

Staff constantly turn to Janice for help and she is always patient and kind, even if she's being asked the same thing for the tenth time. She also always makes time to help students out with questions or problems. Many students see her as a 'mom' figure.

Teacher Jan Brown says, "She is my hidden hero."

Andrew Hess, Teacher, M.E. LaZerte

Andrew is full of inspiring and innovative ideas. He is always driven to discover new ways to better help his students to strive for success—like visiting the NAIT culinary labs to see how space is configured and what potential changes can be implemented at the school. He also runs an after school culinary club for students who can't fit classes in during the day.

He is selfless with his time, and gets involved in many school activities and community events (like the BMW Blue Ribbon Fashion Show and Wings of Providence cookie drive). He also gets his students involved in the charity events. He spends many extra hours helping students prepare for culinary competitions, staying late and coming in on weekends

Andrew has improved the culinary program to incorporate industry expectations and skill development. The students create and deliver the items on the school's daily menu to nearly 2,000 people. He also transformed the abandoned greenhouse space to into a space that now grows produce and herbs used in the culinary program. When the cafeteria was going through staff changes, Andrew stepped up and offered to run the day to day operations of the cafeteria on top of his teaching responsibilities. "He has given his students authentic experiences and challenges, and connected them to industry contacts outside the school," says CTS department head Julian Pacholik.

He has grown the culinary program from one class of 17 students to a full time culinary arts program with 113 students. One former student noted that, "Mr. Hess inspired me to become a teacher with the same amount of care and dedication he displayed."

Recognition of Merit *continued*

Tami Dowler-Coltman, Principal, Victoria School of the Arts

Victoria is a K to 12 school with a complex environment, with many areas of focus, needs and challenges [1,800 students and two specialized programs of choice (arts and IB)].

Principal Dowler-Coltman has created an innovative, unique and collaborative leadership structure at Victoria. The four assistant principals say, “Tami is a skilled architect who has orchestrated an irreplaceable and distinct model of leadership and staff development at Victoria. She has greatly enhanced student and staff growth.” She created ‘trio teams’ in five main areas. Teacher leaders were identified in each area and the other teachers worked alongside the teacher leaders; this shifted to a model of collaboration where everyone has a voice. The model allows staff to share responsibility in the creation of the big picture and to share perspectives. The accountability pillar data showed that once the new leadership format was put into place, teachers and students were more satisfied.

Her approach to leadership and staff development is intensive, purposeful and effective. All teachers receive professional one-on-one coaching to improve practice through feedback. Teacher Kerri-Lyn Cayen says, “Tami fills weekly leadership meetings with play, curiosity, wonder, discovery learning and powerful questions. She has a contagious passion and cultivates a love of learning.”

As a certified executive coach, Tami taught staff that growth comes from success, risk, error and discomfort. Staff learn to design solutions to their challenges. She honours all members of the team and sees all staff groups as leaders.

Past-Chair of the school council and arts society says, “The shared learning between students and teachers is amazing! She leads by example and instills a wonderful spirit of community in the school.”

Thank You.

Thank You.

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