

Edmonton Public Schools'
DISTRICT RECOGNITION
2013 - 2014

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



Program

Greetings

Master of Ceremonies –
Board Chair Sarah Hoffman

Feature Performance

Musical entertainment provided by the
M.E. LaZerte Drum Line

Opening Remarks and Introductions

Board Chair Sarah Hoffman

Sponsor Acknowledgement

Presentations for District Recognition of Service

Presentations for District Recognition of Teams

Presentations for District Recognition of Merit

Closing Remarks

Board Chair Sarah Hoffman

Reception

Atrium, Centre for Education

Message from the Board of Trustees

For close to two decades, the District Recognition Program has shined a well-deserving 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 welcomes the opportunity to honour our remarkable group of award winners. We realize that you may have different experiences in supporting teaching and learning, but you each share a similar set of 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, guide and inspire colleagues to surpass expectations. Your work is far reaching – infused with passion, talent and dedication, and makes a true difference in the lives of our students and their families.

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



Sarah Hoffman
Board Chair

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 our District are recognized through the annual District Recognition Program.

There are three types of District Recognition. Three recipient categories are recognized each year: parents or community members, secondary students and staff members.

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE honours an individual's outstanding professional and/or volunteer contributions to the life of the school or community. 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 the outstanding contributions or achievements made by groups through collaborative efforts. 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 the outstanding achievement of individuals who have demonstrated a standard of excellence in an area of endeavour. 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

Lori Allen, Scheduling Clerk, Jasper Place School

“She quite simply is amazing,” says work experience coordinator Keith Haynes. Lori is responsible for the intake and scheduling of approximately 2,400 students as well as all the related administrative duties. She is the epitome of calm and professional. Regardless of how busy Lori is, she will stop what she is doing and help students, staff or parents.

Assistant Principal Wilkie says, “She is a key contributor to the success of Jasper Place and we are lucky to have her as part of our team. She was the key person in our transition to PowerSchool and PowerTeacher and has helped other staff many times.”

Lori is organized, resourceful and selfless. She is always looking for ways to improve the processes and takes the initiative to try new things. “She is the heart and soul of our school and sets an incredible example for all staff,” says Nancy Davis, department head of student services.

Roberta Baril, Teacher, W.P. Wagner School

Roberta is the department head of fine arts and international languages. Her infectious enthusiasm inspires students to always strive to do their best. She always sets the bar a little higher and coaches each student until they achieve their goals. She is a vocal advocate for music education and the positive influence it has on overall student achievement and the sense of belonging it brings to the school community.

Roberta has built an amazing band program with three grade-level bands including jazz, symphonic and concert bands. Her program includes as many as six curricular and co-curricular bands, giving students ample opportunity to experience a wide selection of music styles at varying levels of difficulty. Outside of class, she also regularly arranges for students to participate in performances, clinics, tours and workshops to broaden their experiences. She also emphasizes the importance of balance in her students’ lives and truly helps them build happy and healthy futures. Former student Sheldon Parr says, “I speak for multiple students when I say that my life at high school would not have been the same without the guidance and hard work of Roberta Baril.”

Some of the many accomplishments by school bands under Roberta’s direction include: Top band at 2014 Alberta International Band Festival; gold and first place finishes in numerous festivals over the past several years; and most students represented from a single school in the district’s high school honour band and the Alberta provincial honour band.

Marlene Bossert, Administrative Assistant, Oliver School

Marlene has worked for the district for almost 40 years, 32 of which have been spent at Oliver School. She is the 'go to' person who takes pride in knowing all there is to know about the community, the school and the history of the 104-year-old school building. Her demonstrated leadership and vision have had a positive impact on the school's community partnerships. She often meets with partners such as Grant MacEwan University and Tim Hortons to discuss plans or to show appreciation for their support of the school. She has also built a strong relationship with the editor of the Oliver News. As a result, she has written stories and garnered a lot of coverage for school happenings.

She is also instrumental in coordinating many student activities, often lending a hand in the evenings and weekends. Because of her extraordinary dedication to the school, the Nellie McClung Marlene Bossert Award was created. Each year, one Grade 7, 8 and 9 student who epitomises Marlene's virtues – genuine, reliable, self-motivated, committed, team player, accommodating and has a genuine appreciation of Oliver School – receives the award.

She honours the history of the school and often comments on the indentations on those steps in awe of those who walked before her. Principal Poulin says, "As we bid her farewell, we are privileged to walk in the indentation of those worn steps knowing she walked there too."

Dr. Gerry Falk, Principal, Dovercourt School

"Principal Falk is a strong, positive woman who serves as a role model and inspiration for students, educators, parents and those who have had the opportunity to meet and work with her," says teacher Denice Gubersky. "Her willingness to develop programs to benefit the students, staff and parents is truly inspirational," says library technician Tina Fernandes.

Principal Falk is trained in Levelled Literacy and her love of literacy is central to every decision she makes as an administrator. She ensures every teacher is trained in Balanced Literacy, that the library has the best guided reading materials and that every target student is tracked. Each morning, Dr. Falk personally works with struggling readers. She encourages both students and teachers to continue to grow, learn and achieve. She has also been a strong advocate for character education, focusing on being proactive, thinking win-win, showing empathy and being environmental stewards.

Dr. Falk has also been a visionary in the field of technology and has worked hard to acquire SMART Boards, document cameras, netbook and Chrome book carts, and iPads in each classroom.

Thank You.

Recognition of Service *continued*

Ben Hofs, Success Coach, Eastglen School

“Ben is a role model, an inspiration and someone who exacts meaningful change on a daily basis,” says Assistant Principal Matthews. “The difference he has made in the lives of the young people he works with is incredible,” says teacher Benita Peitz.

Ben created the Breakfast Club, which gives a place to those who don’t have one. It’s not uncommon to find more than 30 students having a bite to eat, playing board games, enjoying a family like atmosphere or seeking advice. He also organizes trips and gives students the opportunity to see places they have never been like Drumheller or Jasper. Seeing the faces of the students who have never even left the north side is an amazing sight to see – this is all thanks to the extra effort and hours Ben puts in. He even coordinates bonding staff events like a white water rafting trip.

Ben believes in the power of dreams and supports students in numerous ways like arranging for a student with political aspirations to travel to the Forum for Young Canadians, or training for six months with a student interested in joining the Canadian Armed Forces.

Student Sabastian Takacs says, “I can’t begin to tell you how much Ben has made my life better. He is the most trustworthy person I know and I am lucky to have his support.”

Wayne Lavold, Teacher, Harry Ainlay School

For nearly a decade, Wayne has been presenting at numerous workshops and has helped develop numerous classroom resources that have been of considerable benefit to teachers. He co-authored three human rights resources for the John Humphrey Centre, helping to produce a half hour documentary video to accompany one resource. He also co-authored the Social Studies 10-1 textbook Exploring Globalization; this book is used by three quarters of Alberta classrooms.

Teacher Patti Skolski says, “His passion is contagious and his demeanor is motivational.” He has earned the respect of his students and has had a positive impact on them. Wayne makes sure students are presented with all the information so they can develop reasoning and decision making skills. He encourages them to become productive members of society. He is also the lead supervisor for the Harry Ainlay UN Club, the school’s ATA representative and runs various fun activities that enhance the well-being and camaraderie of staff (like hockey pools or survivor pools). He also leads a Harry Ainlay team for the MS Bike Tour, raising almost \$200,000 in the past six years.

You can commonly hear students saying or writing things like: “Your class has had a profound effect”; “I learned so much this year”; I hope someday I can inspire students like you inspired us.”

Shirley Leveridge, Custodian, Fraser School

Shirley is Fraser’s night custodian and although she starts work toward the end of the school day, she knows most students’ names and has an excellent rapport with them. Students love talking to her and gravitate to her natural kindness. You will find her asking students, staff and parents about their well-being, friends and families. She often comes prepared to celebrate a holiday or the year end by supplying every student and staff member in the school with a special treat. Many families reciprocate her kindness by providing her with cards and little gifts.

Shirley also has an amazing work ethic and always goes above and beyond to ensure that the learning environment is comfortable. Teacher Carol Mott says, “She has finely honed time management and interpersonal skills. Excellence isn’t just something she strives for but something she maintains with ease, pride and efficiency.”

Head custodian Gordon Flatt says, “Her genuinely altruistic nature provides an excellent model for a caring and kind school. She exemplifies what the district seeks in its employees; it’s what each of us should strive to be.”

Armohom Narayan, Head Custodian, Jasper Place School

“Armohom is the heart and soul of our school,” says Principal Stiles. “He takes initiative and thinks about how to best deliver a clean, safe school environment every day. He is very organized, prepares extensively and collaborates very well with colleagues.”

He is approachable, well respected, and his communication and leadership skills are great. In fact, custodians apply to work at Jasper Place so they can be trained and mentored by Armohom. They say, “If you are trained by Armohom, you can work successfully anywhere in the District.”

Armohom involves himself in the life of the school while professionally managing his assigned duties. Jasper Place school is part of his community. His boys went to the school and many of his friends’ and family’s children attend the school.

He often goes the extra mile and has been known to be at the school in the evenings or on the weekend – ensuring an emergency plumbing issue was dealt with and cleaned up; helping with events or sports tournament weekends; or opening up the school for students and teachers returning from a music field trip.

Recognition of Service *continued*

Bernie Pankonin, Business Manager, M.E. LaZerte School

“Bernie’s commitment to coordinating our school plans in an effective and efficient manner, while still serving the student good, is commendable,” says Principal Backs. His knowledge of processes and systems, as well as his ability to positively interact with people, makes him a first rate employee who ensures financial efficiency in the school.

He has a great sense of humour and is always polite and obliging. His focus is always the good of the students. “The fact that Bernie is at M.E. LaZerte makes it a better day for everyone,” say two of his colleagues.

For the past three years, Bernie has also volunteered to help organize and plan graduation festivities. He helps recruit staff, organizes grad photos and fee payments, and oversees all financial aspects throughout the year. On event day, he can be seen doing everything from driving/delivering equipment and decorations, to helping with setup, troubleshooting and teardown.

Assistant Principal McIlwraith says, “He is a man of character and integrity!”

Lynda Parrott, Administrative Assistant, Waverley School

Colleagues say, “No child goes unnoticed by Lynda.” She is quick to notice students having difficulty with social situations. She also takes time to listen to, and help, both parents and staff.

She has spent many hours of her own time reaching out to students, especially those who are socially marginalized. When she came to the school five years ago, she started inviting students into the office to help out with tasks on their breaks. Socially isolated students were mixed with socially competent students, building a group that supported each other. Four years ago, she approached the administration to buy some cameras and she started a photography club. On her own time, she researched themes and weekly missions, and spent lunch hours guiding students, printing photos and arranging displays in the hallways. This became the most attended club in the school and inspired creativity and confidence in the students. She also started a knitting club, which initially began to support a new student who felt left out. Lynda bought a bead kit and invited the student to do bead projects in the office in her spare time. Others students became interested and now there are 26 students involved. She has also organized hampers, warm clothing or lunch items for students and families in need. She even initiated a drive to collect Canadian Tire money so she could buy recess items.

At the same time, Lynda is on top of every aspect of her job responsibilities. She is always smiling and willing to lend a hand.

Assistant Principal Banting says, “Her extraordinary dedication and hard work creates a warm and inviting atmosphere where staff, parents and children flourish under her guidance and support. Words alone cannot thank her enough for the warm climate she has created at Waverley. I have witnessed a positive change at Waverley.” “Mrs. Parrott has become a pivotal person in the evolution of a culture of acceptance and celebration of diversity at Waverley School,” says Principal Crawford.

Brenda Scaddan, Department Head - Social Studies, Queen Elizabeth School

Ms. Scaddan goes far beyond expectations to ensure her school's environment is healthy and vibrant. Her door and heart have always been open for staff and students. She spends many hours on her own time, supporting both students and staff at the school.

"Brenda gets involved with everything without expecting recognition or acknowledgement," says teacher Tanya Buhlmann. If there is a school activity, Brenda is planning it, participating or attending. She's a regular participant at the Social Justice Club's 24-hour Famine and usually takes the 12 – 3 a.m. shift, telling ghost stories, doing yoga or playing board games with the students. For 15 of the past 18 years, Brenda was a key organizer for the graduation banquet. Fifteen years ago, she was key player in establishing the Eid event, to celebrate the end of the holy month of Ramadan. This event continues to foster community and understanding within the diverse school community. She has also supervised Friday prayer for the past 13 years.

Every January and June, she gives up many weekends offering her own social studies diploma preparation class. Not only does she invite Queen Elizabeth's students to attend, she also opens it up to students' friends who attend other district schools. She even brings in breakfast for the students. Brenda also mentors new teachers in the school's social studies department, in addition to being a mentor teacher with University of Alberta education students.

"Her selflessness and devotion is what makes her so unique," says former student and now colleague Rajwa Shibley.

Patti Skolski, Teacher, Harry Ainlay School

Patti is a wonderful role model and mentor. She is well respected by students, staff and colleagues. For the past 32 years, she has been a teacher, department head and now guidance counsellor. She spends her days helping students not only with academic and career goals but also with personal goals and challenges. "She moves seamlessly from dealing with scholarship questions, to calming crying students, to coaching co-workers about how to deal with problematic students, to congratulating students on achievements," says Jane Crowell-Bour, department head of student services.

Patti has a keen awareness of what is going on with students and is intuitively adept at working with them. She is a fabulous listener with an open door policy. Parent Bernice Schubert says, "She is very interested in each student's interests and what will best motivate them to excel in their everyday lives. As a result, students feel very valued."

She ensures the smooth transition of Grade 9 students, and registers and refines programming for over 700 Grade 10 students. She oversees Ainlay Career Thursdays and solicits, books and promotes speakers from a variety of career paths. Patti has also been responsible for preparing submissions for all external and district awards for staff and students. On top of all this, she is a dedicated, motivating volleyball coach. She oversees the scheduling for the annual two-week long Titan Volleyball Tournament for junior and senior high teams from across the province. Through her own volunteer commitments, she constantly shows her students the importance of community involvement.

Recognition of Service *continued*

Cathy Taylor, Principal, Northmount School

Principal Taylor exemplifies the characteristics needed to be an effective leader. She continually seeks opportunities to stretch herself as a leader and an educator, and provides the same opportunities for her staff. Cathy has organized excellent PD sessions at the school. For instance, she brought in a consultant to enhance teaching in writing. As a result, teachers have developed stronger and more meaningful writing lessons. She also brought in Sandra Herbst to teach the importance of creating criteria with students and how valuable it can be to their learning.

Staff have been well equipped to develop and understand the importance of quality assessment plans. Under Cathy's guidance, the Northmount team has developed quality assessment plans for language arts and developed writing units within each grade level group.

Assistant Principal Damian Wilkinson says, "It has been an honour to have Cathy as a mentor and she is someone who exemplifies moral and effective leadership." He also explained that she has been an outstanding coach who purposely seeks out opportunities to stretch him as both a leader and educator. Teacher Melanie Thorson says, "Her support and feedback have always been given in a timely manner and positive direction." "Her love for the community and the betterment of education inspires me daily and encourages those around her to be better leaders," says teacher Lila Berg.

Pete Tirao, Custodian, Riverbend School

"Pete embodies and models our school's pillars of character, citizenship and ability," says Assistant Principal Purych. He is always positive and professional, and has a great rapport with staff, parents and students.

He is committed to quality work which is evident the moment one walks into the school. Despite the varied and numerous requests, Pete is committed to completing tasks with a smile and on time. If he sees a need, he dives in and helps out. He leads by example and always goes above and beyond.

Pete volunteers to help out with supervision at the end of the day to ensure students get on their way safely, or at lunch, shooting hoops or participating in intramurals. He also volunteers to go on fieldtrips. Pete has also played an integral role in athletics and physical wellness in the school. He has been instrumental in developing the junior boys' basketball program, sharing his love and knowledge of the game. On his own time, he attends practices, games and weekend tournaments. Sometimes he also trains with the cross country team after school.

"All people admire him for his work ethic, kindness and commitment to his job and the school," says teacher Adele Olson. Teacher Jeff Wise says, "Mr. Tirao is an irreplaceable part of the school community."

Ruby Torstensen, Administrative Assistant, Meadowlark Christian School

Ruby has been involved with the school since 1982 – as a parent volunteer, lunchroom supervisor, educational assistant and administrative assistant.

Principal Oskoboyny says, “The mission of Meadowlark Christian School is to provide a learning environment that emphasizes: Learning through academics; Living in Christ; Leading by serving others; and Loving with strength and character. Ruby is a role model and exemplar for each of these attributes.”

Her can-do attitude, excellent leadership, organizational skills and commitment to providing quality service was something that all staff, students and community could rely upon. Everyone who entered the school was met with her cheerful smile and helpful nature. Ruby had a wealth of knowledge and never hesitated to help in any way she could. She helped with prayer groups, chaperoning school sports teams and supporting student leadership conferences.

Although Ruby retired in June, her connection to the school carries on with her granddaughter in Grade 3. Ruby continues to volunteer at the school, most recently participating in Read In Week. “I will not forget her contribution to my professional experience or the example her service has provided me,” says teacher Shyann Ethier.

Conni Tymchuk, Technician, Queen Elizabeth School

Conni is a licensed hairdresser who not only supports the curricular objectives of the classroom but also prepares students to be responsible, caring, mature employees.

Since the cosmetology lab is not only a classroom but also a working salon, her duties also include: managing and supervising students at work on clients; inventory ordering and control; accounting; teaching and demonstrating techniques; and helping with evaluation and progress reports. Her real-life experience in the industry enables her to keep students informed of current trends. She is responsible, in large measure, for the success and positive profile of the program.

Her diplomatic approach and understanding nature have been instrumental in helping many students and helping to keep certain students in school. “She has struck a rare balance of supporting without enabling through her compassion and empathy,” says Counsellor Dawn Cross. Students in her classes say she is a source of support, hope and love. Students Victoria Lovett and Souha Rehaime say, “Ms. Tymchuk is a role model. We look up to her and she has been there for us through everything and we want to thank her for that. Her commitment and dedication to us is greatly appreciated.”

Recognition of Service *continued*

PARENT/COMMUNITY

Dr. Heather-Jane Au, Parent, Meadowlark School

For the past five years, Dr. Au has dedicated one full day every week, assisting Grade 1 to 6 students who need short-term reading intervention. She helps ensure at-risk students receive extra help. She takes great notes after each session and shares her reports with the teacher and literacy coach. She's even taken the initiative to pre-read the guided reading lesson plans and has requested extra support materials about reading decoding and comprehension skills to read at home.

When she's not busy reading to students, she helps organize the home reading book room, works with students on other tasks or helps with clerical tasks for literacy intervention.

Dr. Au is a member of the school council, along with being involved on council at her two other children's school councils, and is also a volunteer with the Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Education Association (ECBEA). "Her involvement with ECBEA directly impacts the learning and enrichment of all students in Edmonton Public Schools' Mandarin bilingual programs," says Principal Lam. She helped organize numerous Chinese celebrations, festivals and galas, and sat on the scholarship committee. Stephen Tsang, President of ECBEA, says, "Heather is a 'do-all' volunteer, excellent networker, well-respected organizer, enthusiastic leader and a parent who is passionate about education."

Tim Berrett, Parent, Westglen School

Tim has been an active and integral part of the school community, contributing vastly to the life and community of the school, says parent council chair Shelagh Dunn.

As a five time Olympic race-walker, Tim brought his passion for physical fitness to Westglen School. He initiated and organizes the Athletikids program for elementary students who want to engage in physical activities twice a week before school starts. He also spends many hours coaching the track team and arranging opportunities for kids to compete at a variety of events, most of which take place during evenings and weekends. He has inspired many students to become runners or just have fun and engage in sports even if they are not gifted athletes. Tim also participates in school activities and can be counted on to be there until the end, doing more than his share.

Tim has also been a member of the Westglen Parent Association for many years, and for the last six years, he has been the grants coordinator. Through his initiative and organization, he secured about \$170,000 in grant funding over past six years. This grant money allowed the school to acquire much needed technology, physical education equipment and trees, and to subsidize field trips and artists in residence experiences. Tim also secured funding to hire a historian to research, document, and archive the stories of the school in honour of the 75th anniversary this year. Tim managed this Westglen History Project and his dedication has brought together alumni of all ages, community members, students and staff. This project has also led to many initiatives like research papers, a website and blog, and the publishing of an e-book.

Sam Chow, Parent, Caernarvon School

Principal McCorquodale says, “Sam is at the school virtually every day, working on one project or another. He is deeply respected by staff, students and fellow parents.” He also explained that Sam’s leadership skills and great personality coupled with his concern for others, has been instrumental in encouraging others to make contributions.

Sam has also been the president of the Caernarvon Parent Association for the last four years. He organized the silent auction, organized the Student Union Ticket Packet book sales and was instrumental in organizing volunteers and scheduling for the casino.

He helped out on field trips, hot lunch days, family night, parent work bees and various other school activities. He also wrote updates for SchoolZone and helped out in the classroom. Teacher Wendy Porteous explained that many English Language Learners (ELL) parents and grandparents drop kids off in her class and Sam often acts as interpreter, helping to explain things and get messages across. This is just one more way Sam helps build a stronger and more inviting school community.

Margot Hrynyk, Parent, Lillian Osborne School

Principal Hancock says, “Margot leads, motivates and mobilizes groups of individuals to step up and make positive change in their communities. She is always thinking ahead and asking how she can do and help more.”

For the past five years, Margot has been an active volunteer at the school and has served as both co-chair and chair of the parent council. In 2009, the school’s inaugural year, she led fundraising initiatives to support the school’s legacy project. As a result, the entire student body travelled to New York. In following years, she also planned and organized fundraising for the fine arts program, athletics department and library. She also continues fundraising to furnish the new theatre planned for the school.

On top of all the fundraising, Margot serves on the Board of Crusaders for the school’s Drum Line, and she has helped with community and school events. She helps bridge connections and creates a strong sense of community.

Lea MacKenzie says, “I have been constantly amazed by what Margot can accomplish and how she can inspire others to step up and make a positive difference. She does all this on top of a full-time job and busy family life.”

Jennifer Klein, Parent, McKernan School

Dr. Klein is passionate about health and fitness. In 2012, she approached the school with the intent to build an elementary running club at McKernan.

She networked with parents and staff to get the club started. The club met every Tuesday and Thursday morning and would go in any type of weather. Jennifer organized and supervised the course, recording distances, boot camps, events, motivational speakers and driving to races.

By the 2013-2014 school year, the club had over 60 per cent of elementary students participating throughout the year. These students also participated in cross-country races and numerous competitions throughout the year. Dr. Klein planned celebrations, posted updates on SchoolZone and emailed parents about results and upcoming events. She also organized the first ever Alberta Medical Association Ever Active Youth Club Run, with the launch at McKernan School.

Not only does the club help meet physical education and curriculum expectations, it promotes students’ ‘fit for life’ attitude. Principal Cleveland says, “Jennifer has made a difference to our school community and served as a role model for parents as partners.”

Recognition of Service *continued*

Gerry LeDrew, Community Member, Pollard Meadows School

Gerry has been generous in time, spirit and money. He drives one hour every day to get to and from the school, to volunteer for four hours each afternoon. He has helped out with everything from field trips, counting hundreds of cheerios and reading or spelling with students, to photocopying materials and creating beautiful bulletin boards. If something needs to be done, he just does it. He often brings in fruit, bags of prizes for the classroom prize bin and sometimes buys things a student may need like felt pens.

“The best part about Gerry is how he interacts with the students,” says teacher Tara Bilak. Gerry has been a mentor and grandfather figure for many students. The students love him and you can often hear them asking, “Can I go work with Mr. LeDrew?” He is extremely patient, dedicated and always has a smile on his face.

Student Noor Khara says, “Mr. Drew is the best. He is really nice and kind and is a very special volunteer.”

Don Lore, Community Member, District Foundation

Don is an exemplary role model who has contributed over 30 years of community service to numerous organizations in Edmonton. He has been (and continues to be) an inspiring and quality basketball coach at several district schools since 2003. He provides a solid foundation for young athletes, spending countless hours at practices, games and tournaments.

Since its launch in 2010, Don has been a member of the Board of Governors for the Edmonton Public Schools Foundation. For the Foundation, he has generously contributed both time and finances. He can always be counted on to take on any type of task, from attending events to helping with setup and teardown duties. Don is also a generous annual contributor and has been influential in helping engage other community members. He has recruited numerous individuals to attend information sessions and many of these individuals have become donors and volunteers. Foundation Chair, Dr. Louise Hayes, says, “Lucky for us, he has a take charge approach and always shows up with a BIG smile on his face.”

Dawn Macdonald, Parent Volunteer, Belgravia School

For many years, Dawn was a parent volunteer whose time and effort were dearly appreciated by the school community.

For the past 10 years, Dawn was the master gardener and pond keeper for Belgravia’s Outdoor Learning Centre (OLC). Parent Council member Michael Cohen says, “Her limitless energy and extensive expertise kept the OLC beautiful and operational.” In addition, she led the garden club. She organized dozens of students and parents as they planted, weeded and harvested the vegetable garden. She also organized the school’s annual soup day, in which students prepared and enjoyed soup made with the garden’s produce.

Dawn has a chemistry background and helped out with specific classroom science projects in the garden, like teaching how chlorophyll can be extracted from plants and analyzed. She also organized the annual science fair and used her contacts at the University of Alberta (U of A) to recruit grad students to be judges and to prepare swag bags and door prizes collected from various U of A science departments.

“Dawn has built a sense of community, and the students, teachers, parents and community members owe her a debt of gratitude,” says Teacher Tina Yonge.

Steve McEachern, Community Volunteer, Strathcona School

'Uncle Steve,' as he's referred to, is a Second World War veteran and a Strathcona alumnus. For the past seven years, Steve has played a pivotal role in organizing and transforming the Remembrance Day celebration into a very well attended major event. He takes great pride and interest in all aspects of the celebration.

Steve spends many hours meeting and talking with student organizers. He shares first-hand stories about being in the war, giving students a unique life experience. He helps organize, contacts and invites Strathcona veterans, ensures veterans have a part to play in the ceremony and addresses the assembly of more than 800 staff, students and visitors. Former student Samantha Semler shared that Mr. McEachern has a generous character and enthusiasm for community engagement. Samantha says, "He willingly offered his services and had enthusiasm and excitement for whatever the task was. The celebration was important in connecting community members with the school. I believe much of the success can be attributed to the constant guidance and commitment of Mr. McEachern."

"His commitment to the school and keeping the memory alive makes a difference to the culture of the school," says Assistant Principal Tom Davey.

Cherie Mears, Community Volunteer, Rutherford School

Cherie is a retired teacher with a background in reading recovery and has been volunteering twice a week for the past four years. She has a wealth of knowledge and experience she brings to students when helping them with their reading skills. She also keeps detailed documentation about student strengths and concerns to share with teachers. Teacher Jacquie Klatt says, "Cherie's one-on-one work with students helps improve literacy skills and at the same time, makes students feel confident and successful in their reading abilities."

Her love of literacy also extends to the school library, helping to catalog, shelve books and repair damaged materials. Whatever it takes, she does it with a smile and cheerful attitude. Library Technician Val Dickinson explained that Cherie will even purchase and donate books she thinks the students will enjoy.

"Her ability to connect with students, her talent in assisting students, and her caring and compassionate attitude make her an integral part of our school community," says Principal Morison.

Carol Sparks, Parent, Northmount School

"On so many occasions, the staff at Northmount reflects on how fortunate we are to have a parent like Carol in our school community," says Principal Taylor. She has spent countless hours helping out in various capacities at the school.

As a school with no teacher librarian, Northmount feels fortunate that Carol spends one day a week collecting, circulating, shelving and caring for the school's library materials. She continues to be the lead lunch room supervisor, and helps out at field trips and school-wide events and activities.

She is the treasurer for the Northmount Parents' Association. Carol has been instrumental in securing grants for additional funding for technology, literature and special events, and has helped co-ordinate casino fundraising. She is an advocate for increased parental involvement and awareness.

In addition to being a great mom, she is a mentor and role model for many other students in the school.

STUDENT

Tina Oh, Student, Lillian Osborne School

“Tina was an amazing role model within both the school and community. She was truly an amazing ambassador,” says Jenni Shwetz, department head of student life and social responsibility. Principal Hancock says, “Tina is intellectually, morally and personally driven to ensure that each project she contributes to receives her very best.” “Tina approaches all situations with others in mind first and foremost,” says Coreen Hudec.

Tina was the school council president last year. She oversaw all aspects of student life initiatives. For instance, she organized the Rock-a-thon where students rock in rocking chairs all night; over \$15,000 was raised for the Canadian Mental Health Association. She was also on the executive of the Lillian Osborne Orientation Program (LOOP). She played a vital role in connecting Grade 10 students to the school. She also participated in most school events where her outstanding leadership skills were put to use with everything from planning to cleanup.

Outside school, she (along with a classmate) launched the website concern.me which examined the relevancy of current issues to youth and challenged students to examine their own opinions on important global and local matters. She consistently searches for new ways to connect people and engage in meaningful activities.

Thank You.

Recognition of Teams

STAFF

2013-2014 Harry Ainlay Catchment Professional Learning Day Committee

The organizing committee did a fantastic job bringing together staff from 18 different schools for a day of learning and relationship building. They were very organized and responsive to the feedback they received in a survey from over 600 participants. An online registration form was created, making the process easier and more efficient.

Richard Secord Principal Kathleen Marzolf says, “By including expertise from district consultants, staff from 18 schools and community partners in the presentations, they were able to provide a variety of meaningful and interesting sessions. The needs of all attendees were taken into consideration. Attendees from different staff groups, programs and grades all had a wide choice. Whether attendees were looking for something to use in the classroom or office, or focusing on their well-being, there was a session available.”

“Having the day run so smoothly allowed the opportunity to network with others – an important part of any professional development day,” says Keehewin teacher Laurel Baizley.

amiskwacy Academy Staff

Julian Daly, Executive Director of Boyle Street Community Services says, “amiskwacy Academy is trusted in and by the community, and well known for the collaborative way they work with other organizations. They not only understand the theory of partnership but are, most importantly, able to practice it on a day-to-day working and operational basis.” Julian explained how amiskwacy staff and students regularly help Boyle Street by baking bannock, building furniture or drumming at the centre. “They’ve had a positive and spiritual impact on the folks we serve,” Julian says.

“The staff and students of amiskwacy have taken time outside their regular day to partner and collaborate with us at Florence Hallock to make the First Nations, Métis and Inuit experience real for our staff and students,” says Principal Michailides, “The school was able to provide real experiences and stories about aboriginal art, music, dance and way of life. Students were able to see the pride in cultural identity.”

Dr. Sharma, the endowed chair in Aboriginal Health at the University of Alberta, partnered with Principal Hines on the Why Act Now project. The program focused on the development, implementation and evaluation of health intervention for Aboriginal youth. Dr. Sharma says, “amiskwacy Academy’s commitment to a holistic learning environment has provided a significant contribution to the health and wellness of youth in Edmonton.” From hot breakfast and lunch programs to a balanced curriculum with Aboriginal context (like Elder teachings and ceremonies), the staff are providing guidance and fostering growth in a safe environment.

CRITERIA: To recognize the contributions made to the District by a group of parents and community members, the achievement of a significant goal through co-operative group efforts by secondary students, and the excellent contributions made to the District by staff through collaborative group efforts. 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.

Recognition of Teams *continued*

District Website Team

This team is comprised of District Technology staff members Graham Bakay, Landon Cheek, Yoav Engelberg, Wendy Johnson and Jeff Neeve, and Communications staff members Jeremy Fritsche, Lee Hodgkinson, Janet McNally and Evelyn Pham.

This team undertook the redesign of the District's website with incredible tenacity, skill and fortitude. Director of Communications, Lisa Austin, says, "Despite the daunting task of implementing a new content management system, completely restructuring the District's public-facing web content and eliminating standalone sites, the team persevered and held true to a set of core principals to guide their way."

By taking time to thoughtfully consult with parents, community stakeholders and district staff, the team was able to ensure the site was designed to provide information the way they needed it. "The project has enabled the District to present a unified and consistent information display to our public audiences," says Glenn Johnson, managing director of District Technology. "The content management system also allows district messages to be integrated and automatically displayed on individual school websites."

The two departments successfully worked, and continue to work, collaboratively from the onset of the project. They developed a shared vision, maintained constant communication and addressed challenges together. "Their approach is a model for other district projects," says Executive Director David Fraser. The new website is an excellent hub of information and resources for key stakeholders.

Growth Accommodation Plan Team

This team is comprised of numerous staff members from the following departments: Communications, District Technology, Facilities, Inclusive Learning Services, Planning and Student Transportation.

As many of the schools were above desired capacity, the District embarked on a consultative process. Several departments stepped up to collaborate and take a leadership role in this process. They gathered parent and community perspectives on how space for students could best be managed in growing neighbourhoods across the city. Over 1,000 people attended public meetings and over 9,200 provided feedback through an online survey. During this process, an interactive video was created to explain the complexities and implications of the growth and a dedicated Space for Students website was created to house all information, updates and decisions so all information was easily updated and accessible. Messaging was even translated for some families to ensure everyone was aware of all options and decisions being considered and made.

Once recommendations were submitted and the attendance boundaries were finalized, an enormous amount of work continued to ensure that welcoming schools were ready to meet the needs of students who would be attending their newly designated schools. Information packages were compiled and distributed to all parents in affected schools, new technology was ordered and installed, spaces were painted, bus routes were planned and students with special needs were identified and planned for.

Dia Macbeth, Assistant Principal at A. Blair McPherson says, "It was a pleasure to work with all of these departments. They were so incredibly responsive, collegial and professional. Their work ensured a great start up for students this year."

Harry Ainlay Music Program

Rob Speers and Roy Townend lead Harry Ainlay's music program. "Their passion for music shines through loud and clear with the performance of their students," says Patti Skolski. The program offers concert band, symphonic band, choral, general music and guitar. The music department has a first rate reputation both locally and provincially. They provide first class entertainment at various school functions and have been asked to perform at NAIT convocation as well as city and District events. The music department has received many local, provincial and national accolades and awards. The program has also been well supported by the fundraising initiatives of the Harry Ainlay Music Parents Association

Rob and Roy spend numerous hours outside the regular school day ensuring students get the best education possible. Their dedication affords students the opportunity to attend an amazing band camp with special clinicians and to go on a band tour and perform in special venues. Rob and Roy meticulously organize all the details and the teamwork they develop with the students is outstanding. Teacher Tanya Wolfe says, "This program allows young people the opportunity to truly appreciate the art of music." Dr. Robert Ambrose, Associate Director for School of Music at Georgia State University explained how he had worked with some Harry Ainlay musicians in a workshop he was doing for the Alberta Honour Band. He said, "I was truly blown away by their musicianship, work ethic and attention to detail in music. It is obvious the band program has had a significant impact on their musical lives. The program is a model for the Province and indeed for all of Canada."

Institute for Innovation in Second Language Education (IISLE)

IISLE provides outstanding service and support to second language teaching and learning in the District and beyond. The team members are Janice Aubry, Marnie Beaudin, Marie Commance-Shulko, Michelle De Abreu, Melody Kostiuik, Valerie Leclair, Jacquie Preuss, Norman Sieweke, Charlotte Smith, Leanne Sprake, Rosario Vasquez and Pat Worthington.

Strathcona second languages department head Mark Babin says, "District staff and students are fortunate to reap the benefits of a team that is dedicated to supporting the teaching and learning of 11 second languages, four second language programs and more than 30 second language course streams." Edmonton Public Schools has one of the province's most successful second language learning models with some of Canada's most comprehensive policies and regulations. "The role of IISLE in the District's achievement cannot be overstated," says Mark. Several members of this team have served on international committees and projects, and many have been recognised both locally and internationally.

IISLE provides pedagogical, resource and curriculum support, and they offer professional development opportunities, often at no cost. The consultants also offer individual mentoring and coaching, and they organize the annual Second Languages Best Practices Day. "They foster collaboration and leadership among language educators," says T.D. Baker's French lead teacher Stephanie Jackson. "Administrators and lead teachers from around the world look to the work being done by IISLE for guidance to improve the quality of their language programs." Florence Hallock Principal Dean Michailides says, "The team is irreplaceable in its depth of expertise and skill."

Recognition of Teams *continued*

Jasper Place CTS (Career and Technology Studies) Department

The team worked tirelessly preparing students for the Provincial Skills competition. In reality, they were preparing students for a seamless transition into post-secondary education and/or the workforce. They met daily and, for hours, students practiced and honed their skills for the big competition. All the training took place outside of the regular schedule. The pride of these teachers is palpable. Principal Stiles explains that watching the students perform was spectacular, but watching the teachers watch their students perform was magical. “The caring, commitment and sheer joy of our staff was obvious,” she says.

Students commented on how much they appreciated the guidance and generosity of the teachers, about the confidence they gained and how the preparation for the competition had reshaped their ideas of school and learning. The team dynamic between teacher and student is one of the foundations to lifelong learning. Counsellor Lorraine Lebeuf says, “Each student I have talked to has left championed by an expert and coach. The laughter and collaboration is evident and long lasting.”

“As the District embarks on a direction to promote Career Pathways for our students, the CTS Skills team epitomizes the essence of this initiative,” says Principal Stiles.

Jasper Place Global Café Team

Julia Dalman and Sean Bradley make up this team. They are being recognized for establishing and running the Re-Skilling Fair.

This intergenerational fair brought together community members with students to learn from each other. Older community members with valuable and more traditional skills like canning, woodworking, sewing, drum-making or gardening, shared their skills with students. In return, students passed along some of their technological skills like using email, making online photobooks, editing home movies and converting VHS to DVD.

Community members felt valued for their knowledge and students had the opportunity to recognize the special things they knew and could share. Students were able to discover themselves as leaders, teachers and good citizens. In the act of sharing with others outside the school, students became active participants in the world. Student Elizabeth Lizotte says, “We learned how to communicate with others of a different generation – not a skill we would typically learn in schools. We also learned fun skills we may not have otherwise had the opportunity to learn.”

CJSR News Coordinator Chris Chang-Yen Phillips says, “I was genuinely impressed by my visit to the Global Café and the chance to see how students’ learning is influenced by their experience with the community. Students emerged with not only an enhanced, transformative understanding of the skills they learned, but with a new passion for, and interest in, the process of engaging with their peers and elders. This kind of innovative programming lays the groundwork for healthy community process.”

“The Re-Skilling Fair taught us that good citizenship and good leadership is energizing,” says Assistant Principal Craig Daniel.

M.E. LaZerte Cafeteria Staff

The collaborative members of this team are Debbie Corse, Angeline Bariwan, Patricia Pawluk and Sandy Shahi. They serve 1,900 students and 130 staff and continue to be leaders in serving healthy food choices, explained Business Manager Bernie Pankonin. All meals are also prepared completely in-house.

Their support to the student leadership, in addition to the service they provide in the cafeteria every day, goes above and beyond. Students' Union hosts many events throughout the year for which they need to use the cafeteria. Head chef Debbie taught them how to use the commercial kitchen equipment so the leadership group could host their inner city Christmas dinner for 300 people. During the Taste of LaZerte cultural celebration, cafeteria staff assist students with proper handling and storage. They have helped give back to the community as well by preparing food to give to the Bissell Centre and going there to help serve it. When the school hosts outside guests or a conference, the quality of food and service is impressive. They serve large groups in a fast and friendly manner.

They also help teach students food preparation and baking, even when they are not in the foods program. "They are part of our educational team," says Shelley Kofluk.

Student Cassandra Speta says, "They see the potential in every student and will teach and guide them to become successful; in fact, they have inspired me to become a chef. Without their help, I wouldn't be working towards my apprenticeship."

M.E. LaZerte Tech Team

This team consists of Ted Ani, Jordan Dunn, Chelsea Erdmann, Joe Garreck, John Nelson, Tamar Runcer, Thom Stahlke and Robb Wynn.

They led staff through the transition to Google, creating reference guides with step-by-step instructions to manage each change. They have also been invaluable with leading technological PD training sessions on everything from Google apps and docs, to web conferencing and current educational apps. The team provided timely sessions to ensure a smooth transition.

They continue to provide power teacher training and understanding, communicating information to parents and students. They have raised awareness about responsible digital citizenship and what to think about before electronically posting information or comments. Last year, a brand new website design was implemented and, as a result, social media presence has increased and feedback has been amazing. This team helped staff switch from conventional P drive file sharing to a Staff Help site with bookings, calendars and shared files. Student Anika Wong explained how the team introduced the 'incredibly useful' remind101 text messaging system. Teachers can create online classes and send important news updates and reminders to the students via text message or the app if they download it and have the password from the teacher.

Throughout the year, they are constantly assisting students and teachers with technology needs. Assistant Kim Ogrodnick says, "Their contributions have enhanced teacher learning, increased community awareness and built a solid foundation for the ever changing technology that educators face."

Recognition of Teams *continued*

Michael Strembitsky School (MSS) Faculty

The MSS faculty are leaders in inspiring education. They created and published a book called *Authentic Learning in the 21st Century: Reconceptualising Learning and Teaching at Michael Strembitsky School*. The book outlines the school's innovative practices and has helped other teachers throughout the province see the importance of authentic teaching practices. MSS is committed to the values of students being engaged thinkers, ethical citizens and having entrepreneurial spirit.

Kim Hordal-Hlewka from Ever Active Schools says, "They are to be commended for their work with embedding wellness within their school culture, for how they teach (beginning with faculty and then students and the community), and for taking a lead role in education." The faculty are always willing to share their knowledge and experiences. They are a demonstration site for Alberta Education and they have granted interviews, and have hosted tours, open houses and demonstration days for other educators. They also are huge supporters and mentors for student teachers.

University facilitator and former district teacher Louise French shared an example of the kind of teaching that MSS does. A project called SMAK-G was a union of many curricula objects. It started with teaching viscosity and moved to food sciences to discuss chocolate making and creation of a recipe, to fine arts to design a chocolate wrapper, to completion to be sold by a local business person. "This is inspiring education at its best," says Louise.

Ross Sheppard Finance Team

Principal Paulitsch says, "The finance team has contributed greatly to the culture of We are Shep. Corinne Knop, Monica McGrath and Jeannie Taylor make up this team. They provide first class service to students, parents and staff through efficient, thorough and accurate accounting." The team is genuine in their desire to serve others and the school has received numerous compliments about the quick in and out process, coupled with friendly interactions.

They set up cross-training so they can help each other during busy times or cover off for each other, thus increasing the strength of this already collaborative team.

They streamlined the registration process and bus pass sales. They implemented a review of school-generated funds and developed clear and concise guidelines for staff to adhere to. They also met with staff to help them understand the system that was set up. The end result was monies found to put towards deficit reduction. Assistant Principal Stacy Fysh says, "Healthy financial practices have become an integral part of the way students, staff and parents discuss Ross Sheppard's future goals." The finance team asks challenging and clarifying questions to move the school's work forward and to solidify practices that will work as efficiently as possible for as many stakeholders as possible.

Strathcona Math Department

The members of this department are Linda Aschenbrenner, Crystal DeJong, Greg Forsyth, Joe Johnston, Lisa Lei, Hung Ly, Gina MacKechnie, Clayton Maleski, Deanna Matthews and Maureen Selk.

This department has worked hard to demystify math and make it something that all students feel is within their reach, regardless of grade or course level. “The result is that students have stayed in math courses and flocked to the highest level of math available in the school,” says Principal Van Ginhoven.

This team focused on all available data and identified areas requiring improvement. They then developed strategies to reduce obstacles and give students confidence. They established the Math/Science 10 Transitions to give students struggling with the subject a safe haven to ask questions, take chances, learn with very nurturing teachers and acquire the skills to tackle the more challenging Math 10C class. Student Jade Barr shared that in Grade 10 when she first took Math 10C, she was doing terribly, lost her confidence and dropped out of the class. She took the transitions class and it rebuilt her confidence. In fact, it became one of her favourite classes and she passed with almost a 90 per cent average. Now in Grade 12, she is very confident of passing her math class.

Before school, at lunch and after school, you will find math teachers coaching and encouraging students. In preparation for Diploma or Advanced Placement exams, you will see up to 50 students at three-hour long Saturday morning training sessions. As a result of the example these teachers set, a large number of high achieving math students started volunteering their time to help struggling students. The results of this department’s efforts are evidenced in the Diploma scores (nine per cent higher than provincial average) and Advanced Placement scores (average of 4.5 out of 5). George Ewonus, the Director of The College Board Canada says, “The mathematics department at Strathcona is producing at an exceptional level we rarely see in the 600 Advanced Placement (AP) high schools across Canada and 20,000 AP high schools across the globe.”

Recognition of Teams *continued*

Strathcona Student Services

This team consists of Myraldine Balderama-Bana, Paul Caines, Mark Cannon, Melanie Cardinal, Lynn Hamilton, Greg Kereliuk, Richard McAdie, Jo Modine, Melinda Paschink, Kelly Pumphrey, Natashya Shewchuk, Neil Smith and Ron Ward.

They develop initiatives and programs based on student needs and ensure they are delivered in a coordinated, purposeful, effective and responsive manner. This team is an integral part of the school's academic and social operation. They assumed the management of Learning Strategies to provide students who need specific support in their learning and they oversee the English Language Learners. Student Services also supports the community living skills and behaviour learning assistance program, helping to integrate students with special needs.

A parent of two students with unusual gifts and challenges said, "Student Services far exceeded our expectations and hopes." Her oldest son was incredibly bright but also had Tourette's Syndrome. Student Services was quick to identify necessary support, anticipate issues, develop effective strategies and monitor progress. As a result, potential conflicts were avoided. Her son proudly graduated with distinction in the Advanced Placement program. Other parents explained how Student Services helped them realize their daughter suffered from severe social anxiety. After many struggles and lots of support and resources, the parents are so thankful to report their daughter is now in Grade 12 and has joined two clubs without being prompted to do so.

Social work consultant Ines Cesar says, "They consult with each other and rely on each other's expertise and strengths. They also seamlessly collaborate with the administrative team and other teachers to provide the much needed support."

Virginia Park Teaching Staff

Traditionally, the annual Fine Arts Night has been organized by parents. This event has been a major fundraiser to help provide opportunities like Artist-in-Residence for music, art, drama and dance, full-day student art workshops and field trips. The event has also been a much anticipated community highlight for over 30 years.

Last year, there was a lack of parents and volunteers to make the event happen. Staff were informed the event would not be taking place and by the end of that same day, a team of teachers was in Principal McIsaac's office saying they would take on the event.

She says, "As a principal, this was not my expectation or request. They made the commitment to ensure Fine Arts Night would continue and remain a part of Virginia Park's long-standing history and culture." Parent council president Sheila Graham explained that they had reached volunteer burnout. Lots of parents were willing to help out in small ways but no one was able to commit to the overall organization. Sheila says, "The entire Virginia Park team voluntarily stepped into the organization role – with stunning success."

After months of planning, organizing and working late into the evenings and weekends, the event did happen and was a huge success. The event raised over \$10,000. Staff and parents are already talking about collaborating on this year's event, which can only have positive outcomes for students and the community. Volunteers Grace Morrison and Jeanne Barr said, "The staff have obviously taken the interests of students to heart. They also guided students through many other magnificent events during the year."

STAFF AND PARENT/COMMUNITY

Richard Secord-Harry Ainlay Road Runner Club

The organizing team that initiated this innovative after-school club consisted of Linda Bergquist, teacher librarian at Harry Ainlay; Cailin Eaton, teacher at Richard Secord; Fern Reirson, teacher librarian at Richard Secord; and Darlene Schindel, health champion coordinator for 'NSTEP.

The intent of the club was to support children academically, increase their love of physical activity and develop healthy eating habits while learning alongside the high school student mentors that they trained with. They effectively included many community members, like members of the Edmonton Eskimos or University of Alberta nursing students, to lead and participate in engaging activities.

Students who were involved in the club experienced improvement in their reading, gained knowledge of healthy food choices, and learned fitness skills. Teacher Gilles Collins says the students he recommended to participate in the club demonstrated growth in their confidence academically and in their knowledge of how being healthy impacts the way they think and learn. Teacher David London says, "This team has improved student attitudes towards learning and increased strategies in reading for at-risk students."

Assistant Principal Nyitrai says, "This initiative created lasting collaborative relationships among professionals to inspire students to make the connection between healthy living and their personal successes."

PARENT/COMMUNITY

Breakfast Club, M.E. LaZerte

Every Wednesday morning, Georgette Elliott and a group of volunteers from Steele Heights Baptist Church and Emmanuel Church, graciously donate their time to prepare breakfast for M.E. LaZerte students. Georgette started the program four years ago and actually funded the club herself for the first couple years. To date, 13,458 students have been served. They serve students about 30-34 times a year at a cost of about \$160 each time. The breakfast club procured donations from Save-On-Foods, school staff and other supporters.

Their mission is to offer students a nutritious breakfast to start their day, to provide community connections and to build relationships by listening, laughing, coaching and caring. Foods teacher Heide Ewanyk says, "This project is a true blessing. For many students, this may be their only meal of the day. I can only imagine how special this is for students who are unable to have their nutritional needs met at home." Each week, students help the volunteers carry all the supplies and help set up the food lab. Students say that the breakfast provides an opportunity for them to meet new friends and start their day off right by fitting breakfast into their busy schedules. Students also express how friendly and welcoming the volunteers are. Student Hina Khan says, "They treat me and my fellow students as if we were their own children – that's how much they care about the students at M.E. LaZerte."

Georgette feels it is important to support the high school students as they are sometimes forgotten because they are older. The club creates a sense of community.

Recognition of Teams *continued*

Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation (EOCF)

Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation has been an invaluable asset to the Edmonton Public Schools' Foundation. They helped to generate funds, partners and opportunities for full-day kindergarten students who are at risk – students whose families struggle financially, who have learning difficulties, who have limited English language skills, and who come to the classroom with multiple challenges. “EOCF has played an important role in helping the EPS Foundation make a difference for kindergarteners one classroom at a time,” says Foundation board chair Dr. Louise Hayes.

Two of the seven full-day kindergartens funded by the Foundation have received significant support from EOCF. Lauderdale School (2011 to present) and Princeton School (2014-15 and 2015-16 school years) have benefitted tremendously from EOCF's generous funding. To date, EOCF has contributed \$400,000 to the Foundation. Teachers at these schools have an extra half day of teaching time and access to additional resources to enrich student learning. Principal Hess says, “We have seen tremendous growth in our Princeton kindergarten students since full-day kindergarten was implemented last year. Student who lacked some basic readiness skills are more prepared for learning in Grade 1.” “Students develop and practice skills needed to achieve goals, increase attention span, problem solve, manage emotions, communicate needs and develop cognitive skills,” says former Lauderdale teacher Terry Odegard.

Patrick LaForge even appeared on the What I Learned in Kindergarten video, filmed in Lauderdale's classroom. The footage was used to showcase the benefits of full-day kindergarten to potential Foundation donors. EOCF Board members also attend, and bring other community members to Foundation information sessions, events and activities to ‘show and tell’ the importance of full-day kindergarten.

Greenfield Dads Matter (GDM)

After listening to a keynote speaker at a GETCA parent night, Lew Knechtel and his wife were inspired by the concept of empowering dads to become more involved with their children's school life. Thus began the Greenfield Dads Matter parent leadership group which is now 90 members strong.

Trustee Nathan Ip says, “Through workshops, informal gatherings and family orientated events, GDM has created a welcoming space for parents, particularly fathers, to be more involved in their children's lives. GDM truly exemplifies community engagement and the importance of parents as partners.”

This group initiated family science night and a year-end barbecue. “They also came to the rescue with completing the much needed renovations to the school courtyard,” says Principal Linden. They cleaned up the area and built planter boxes. Last year, they designed a logo for their group with the help of students. Two dads worked with the finalists to complete the winning design.

“There has been a cultural shift thanks to GDM that has broken down the invisible barriers keeping fathers and male caregivers from entering the realm of elementary school life and actively participating in children's learning,” says Assistant Principal Mueller.

Métis Child and Family Services Society (MCFSS)

“The leadership of MCFSS has been highly competent, efficient, courageous and knowledgeable in understanding the unique needs of Aboriginal students,” says Principal Hines. “They have served and supported the many and varied demands and social, emotional, cultural and educational needs of at-risk students and families.”

They provide a daily breakfast and hot lunch program with food and other supplies from the Food Bank. They have purchased uniforms for school sports teams; provided a tipi for the school; given clothing donations for students and parents; assisted students with bus tickets and school supplies; provided funding to order yearbooks so students didn't have to pay for them and supplied the culinary kitchen with appliances. They have also organized and performed Métis culture tributes at school feasts, ceremonies and professional development activities.

Métis Child and Family Services Society Director Mr. Donald Langford, has been the leading force behind the partnership amiskwacy has with MCFSS. He continues to offer guidance and support from his team. “One of the most effective and priceless supports we have is a full-time social worker from MCFSS to help make home visits, gather food and resources, help with legal issues and housing concerns, and help with financial assistance when necessary,” says Counsellor Laurie Sorensen. Their caring and nurturing approach has touched the lives of many people. The circle at amiskwacy is growing stronger every day due to the support and guidance from MCFSS. They are bridging the gaps between diverse populations.

Parent Parking Patrol, Westbrook School

Westbrook School and School Council has been actively working to improve student safety for families as they travel to and from school. “The most significant impact on student safety and driving behaviour has been the creation and activity of the School Council Parent Parking Patrol,” says Principal Shauna Paul.

In conjunction with the school, they created a partnership with the Edmonton Police Service southwest traffic detail, participated in an Active Transportation Plan, participated in a school traffic congestion round table with other schools, community members and city councillor, and they increased communication about student safety both within the school community and greater community.

Sandra Carry, Danielle Ghai, Lisa Hauser, Farha Shariff and Kimber Snider were the five parents who dedicated their morning and after school time to supervise drop off zones, and ensure students got in and out of cars safely. In partnership with the Parents at Westbrook Society, they purchased safety vests and pylons to increase visibility. The group also played a key role in the school efforts to successfully change the city's snow removal policy which now reflects the need to remove windrows around school as soon as possible. Councillor Michael Walters says, “I have been overwhelmingly impressed with the important leadership role the Parents Parking Patrol has played and the initiative they have shown in shifting driving behaviour.” “I believe that due to their diligence, perseverance and commitment, children arrive to Westbrook School happy and safe,” says Constable Paul.

Recognition of Teams *continued*

Parent Reading Mentors, Dr. Donald Massey School

Last year, the rapid population growth at Dr. Donald Massey School coupled with a delay in receiving modular classrooms meant large class sizes with diverse learning needs, especially in the younger grades. The average Division I classroom had 28 students, 12 of whom were English Language Learners and 3-4 had moderate to severe special needs. Despite support from educational assistants, teachers felt students deserved more support. Teacher Shannon Humphrey, along with a few colleagues, took the initiative to provide evening sessions to parents to help them support their children's reading at home. Out of these sessions emerged a group of parents willing to dedicate regular time to help students across the school to improve their reading.

Shannon Humphrey trained these parents and created a volunteer schedule. These reading buddies were loved by students. Students gained confidence in their reading skills and teachers were grateful for the students' significant improvements. Shannon says, "The contributions made by these volunteers meant over 65 students, who were at-risk for reading achievement, had an extra hour of supported reading time every week. I was impressed with their willingness to contribute to the well-being of the entire student body." "As a result of these parents, I can confidently say that our students are well on their way to be successful citizens," says teacher Joanne Jarema-Johnson.

Former Principal Jennifer Allen says, "The involvement of this amazing group of parents truly demonstrates that when a community comes together to support our children, the results can be profound."

Rutherford Road Runners

The coaching team consists of parents Patti Kehoe and Kim Jain. They have mentored upwards of 60 Grades 1 to 6 students in the running club. The club is about having fun while enjoying the health benefits of physical activity and running in particular. Mrs. Kehoe is extremely knowledgeable and organized and leads a team of parent volunteers. The team builds relationships and helps students achieve their potential. Their positive attitudes and boundless energy have been contagious for the students involved. Principal Morris says, "I consider our school to be privileged to have such highly dedicated volunteers."

The parent coaches not only ran the after-school club for the entire year, they also took students to many different running events, both after school and on the weekends. They even provided each student with a club t-shirt. Teacher Colette Mondor says, "They were not only committed to providing opportunity for physical fitness but also creating a team and community."

Students Madeleine Dosser and Zita Berger-Smale say, "You don't have to be the fastest to be in the running club, you just have to be committed to try your best. They don't force you to do anything you don't want to, only things you are comfortable with. We are so grateful to have such amazing coaches." Parent Indhri Govender says, "I know the coaches are contributing to the children's understanding of the importance of lifelong physical fitness."

Toys 'R Us North Edmonton, Queen Elizabeth School

Toys 'R Us North Edmonton, along with their managers Karin Ryan and Janette Cogan, have contributed to the success of Queen Elizabeth's work experience program.

They mentored many students and provided invaluable opportunities for them to learn about the workforce. Toys 'R Us has accepted numerous students over the years. One particular student who was wheelchair bound was having difficulty securing a placement. Karin welcomed him with open arms and found him appropriate and manageable tasks. She provided him constant encouragement which ensured he left feeling proud of his accomplishments and eager to return the next day. Work experience coordinator Gail Ditlof says, "Karin has been a guardian angel since she has never refused a single student, regardless of possible challenges. Janette makes every effort to provide a variety of experiences for students to learn about business operations. Her caring approach and enthusiasm is noteworthy." Both managers have spent countless hours coaching students in skill development, teamwork, confidence building and providing quality work experience. They ensure all students are treated with dignity and respect while they are part of the Toys 'R Us team.

Student Terri-Lyn Wilson says, "I got credits toward my diploma but also had the chance to see what it was like to have a job. I learned so many things I didn't know how to do. Karin and Janette were supportive and the staff were friendly, respectful and understanding. I'm thankful I got to meet them."

PARENT/COMMUNITY AND STAFF

McKernan Garden Network

Parent Gina Loewen approached Principal Cleveland about transforming the east side and front yard into a garden space that would support the science curriculum in K to 9 and would provide students with an understanding of food production as they would share in harvesting and cooking with the food. Students could go out to the garden and study plant and animal life cycles, animal and insect habitat, sustainable eco systems or how humans impact the environment. On a sunny day, you can even see art students out drawing sunflowers or math students doing measurements or looking for patterns.

Gina gathered support from like-minded parents (Dr. Karen Christensen-Dalsgaard, Patrick Griffiths, Dr. Darren Nichols and Carol Windram) and teacher sponsor Virginia Lewis. This small network planned space options and researched climate-friendly plants. Gina wrote a proposal to the Toyota Evergreen Foundation and received \$900 for the purchase of seeds, preparation of the garden beds, tools and a garden shed.

With the support of the parents, Virginia Lewis formed an elementary student garden club. In February, the students started growing sprouts in preparation for spring. In May, the Garden Network transformed the east side soil into planting space for potatoes and sunflowers, complete with an automated watering system. Parents and St. George's Anglican Church provided the compost, tools and manual labour. Compost bins were also set up so the garden could become more self sustaining. The over 10-foot high sunflowers provided a fantastic environment for bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. In front of the school, the industrial arts teacher helped build planter boxes for strawberries and vegetables. Parents and students signed up to take turns taking care of the plants. The community was able to share in the harvest and in this fall, the students harvested 250 pounds of potatoes which were sold at the school's welcome barbecue raising \$470 for the garden club. Leftover potatoes were cooked and shared with club students.

Recognition of Teams *continued*

STUDENT AND STAFF

Junior High Leadership Conference, Harry Ainlay School

Assistant Principal Hoyt says, “There are times when a group of teachers and/or students create an event that has a special impact and goes beyond the daily realm. The Junior High Leadership Conference team did that. We are very proud of their work not just at a school level but at a provincial level.” This group of staff and students sacrificed many personal hours with the purpose of creating a lifelong impact province wide.

Students spent the day with international motivational speaker Phil Boyt and the leadership team members, learning how to plan, implement and develop ways to involve the student body in fundraising activity. Wainwright High School student leadership advisor Sandra Grunow says, “This was simply a fantastic opportunity for students and advisors. We took back and implemented many valuable ideas.”

The mayor of Edmonton was astounded by the quality of the conference led by a single high school. Organizers and participants alike walked away having learned something as well as having met new friends and developed important new networks. “Hundreds of junior high students were inspired to make a difference in their schools and communities,” says Shelley Kofluk, department head of student leadership at M.E. LaZerte.

Random Acts of Kindness Club, Lillian Osborne School

This amazing group of students is led by teacher advisor Darlene Scammell. They made a tremendous positive difference in the school and community. “This team models compassion, humility and acceptance,” says grade coordinator Coreen Hudec.

The club has done great work supporting Belmont Elementary School. They planned and implemented a winter festival for the children, complete with activities, games, crafts and food. They also helped round up school supply donations for students at Belmont. They have helped organize numerous fundraisers and clothing drives and read to younger students in the neighbourhood. Some of the other many things they did included picking up garbage, leaving little notes for teachers and others, or providing pick me up treats on special occasions.

Jenni Shwetz, department head of student life and social responsibility, says, “I am constantly amazed at the ideas these individuals have and how far they are willing to go to help others. It doesn’t matter how big or small the task, they are willing to take it on.” “They have inspired our entire student body to get involved and make a difference. It is important to celebrate and recognize individuals who are leading a life of service,” says Principal Hancock.

Recognition of Merit

PARENTS/COMMUNITY

Deron Bilous, MLA, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview

MLA Bilous took a genuine interest in the consultation process to explore a location for a replacement school in a mature neighbourhood, specifically in the greater Beverly community. He was well versed in the complexities, and was actively engaged with stakeholders to gain a good understanding of their values, concerns and hopes.

He worked collaboratively with the District to ensure families were aware of key dates in the process. He even worked with the District to have meeting notices translated into multiple languages. He arranged to have the meeting notices delivered to every home in the community and sponsored a pre-meeting meal to encourage participation. He also set up Facebook events and used social media to promote the open houses. Throughout the process, it was evident Mr. Bilous listened to members of the community, then acted and advocated in a manner that reflected their values and priorities. He played a key role in ensuring the community members had an opportunity to influence the outcome of the replacement project.

Trustee Ray Martin says, “The replacement school is great news for the Beverly community. It wouldn’t have been nearly as successful without the strong working relationship between MLA Bilous and the District.” “After the consultation, Mr. Bilous wrote a supportive letter in a local newspaper, focusing on the exciting energy and opportunity for the Beverly community. He also acknowledged the work of the local trustee in his support of the community’s concerns.

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.

Recognition of Merit *continued*

Dr. Doug Klein, Community Member, McKernan School

Dr. Klein is the Ever Active advocate for McKernan and has successfully created a parent base of like-minded families passionate about student health and activity. As a medical doctor, he is committed to children developing longevity through play, running and movement. He understands that schools influence the lives of children and families. "His legacy will be lifelong commitment to personal activity by students," says Principal Cleveland.

He initiated and organizes the 100 km Club for elementary students. Once a week, students meet with him over the lunch time to walk and run. Students receive small motivational stickers and laces on their journey to receiving their 100 km t-shirt. He applied for and received a \$5,000 Health and Wellness grant from the University of Alberta. He used this money to purchase the t-shirts and motivational materials. Many students exceed the 100 km goal.

He also established a network of support to organize a Battle of the Schools Day for elementary and junior high students within McKernan's catchment area. He successfully sought and received sponsorship from the Strathcona Save-on-Foods to supply healthy snacks, water and a portable tent. Teams were created by mixing schools together to promote community spirit. Assistant Principal Patterson says, "His commitment to fitness activities is an inspiration to all who are involved."

Jennifer Osmond, Parent, Rio Terrace School

Jen has been an integral part of the school's Leader in Me initiatives. Five years ago, Jennifer helped create OWL (Outrageously Wild Leaders) at the school – a group of Grades 4 to 6 students who lead in a variety of ways. Jen facilitates the students coming together once a week to research, investigate, collaborate and plan events and activities for students in the school. The students do everything from phone inquiries to pricing and publicity. Teacher Holly Hammell says, "OWLs learn to be role models for younger students. Jen provides truly authentic active learning and leadership opportunities. She is an inspiration to parents, teachers and students."

She is amazingly patient and leads the students by asking them pointed questions that make them think about both the big picture and the details. She asks questions like, "How will you pay for that? What is your plan of action?" Jennifer has created a safe, collaborative environment where students function with a high level of autonomy. During the meetings, she also addresses the social responsibility of helping others. When things do not go as planned, she guides the students to consider where things broke down and how they would do it differently given another chance.

Principal Langenhahn shared how impressed she is that the OWL group was asked to host a session at a North American Leader in Me symposium held in Edmonton. The group was also recognized by the University of Alberta last year. Students were asked to speak to some of the most influential minds in medicine and science about leadership and how they made it work in Rio Terrace. Principal Langenhahn says, "Despite being a single parent who works full time, her time commitment has made a profound impact on the culture of our school and District."

STAFF

Betty Clark, Administrative Assistant, Queen Elizabeth School

Gail Ditlof says, “I have been extremely impressed with Betty’s enthusiasm, administrative skills and professional demeanor. She takes pride in providing guidance and assistance, and always takes the time to lend a helping hand to make someone else’s day a little better.”

The administrative area can be quite hectic but Betty always greets people with a smile and is always calm, collected and in control. She acts as a buffer, guiding people to the proper places, supervising the area and attending to student, parent and staff requests. “Her calming presence is appreciated by everyone,” says teacher Val Lytviak. “She is admired and respected by our staff and she is an incredible asset.” Her ability to recognize and recall names, faces and events simplifies and assists the assistant principals in many situations. She always completes tasks quickly and accurately.

Betty is also dedicated to helping out with extracurricular school activities. She runs a free Zumba class twice a week for staff, she helps out at open houses or parent teacher interviews, and she attends most school events. She has also volunteered countless hours of her own time to help with the school’s awards committee. She attends after-school meetings, spends weeks updating the program booklet and attends the ceremony to help give out certificates. Berni Yakoweshen says, “Luckily for us, she is also an excellent baker and boosts our staff morale with birthday cakes, squares and cookies. She is a role model and her dedication to our students shines through in her every action.”

Nancy Davis, Department Head - Student Services, Jasper Place School

Nancy’s oversees benchmarking for all the school’s English Language Learners (ELL). With around 300 ELL students, this task is monumental. Nancy worked diligently to figure out a plan that would allow accurate assessment and progress tracking. As a result of Nancy’s innovation and leadership, a process was created and is now down to a science. With very little disruption to their schedules, students have individual interviews with an adjudicator, complete a reading test and give a writing sample. Each student is then accurately benchmarked. The process also includes progress tracking and ensures that interventions are in place when students are found to be struggling. “Nancy is a leader who made what seemed to be an arduous task three years ago into a seamless exercise today,” says ESL teacher Kerry Harvey.

Nancy also coordinates all the Individualized Program Plans (IPP’s) in Jasper Place. She stresses the importance of fostering relationships with students so they are comfortable discussing their learning abilities in a safe and caring environment. Department head Kerry Maguire says, “Nancy is a team player and her work at Jasper Place is invaluable. She helps teachers ensure a quality education for all students.”

Recognition of Merit *continued*

Jeff Goldie, Teacher, Strathcona School

Science department head Dean Carter says, “I have never met anyone as amazing or inspiring as Jeff. He gives so much to this profession and so many people benefit from his selfless actions.” He was definitely a role model and mentor for the school’s motto: One who serves.

He was a master teacher who positively enhanced many aspects of the Strathcona community. His deep knowledge base in all three science disciplines showed in his lessons. Students were kept engaged by relating science to everyday situations that they could identify with. Jeff’s extensive science knowledge also allowed teachers to ask him for answers to questions they were unsure of. He was able to write effective and sound worksheets and assessments, providing the science department with excellent resources. Jeff would answer students’ questions but usually followed that with his own questions – pushing them further in their thinking, challenging them to discover more about a topic and ultimately gaining greater understanding. Students were always central to his practice.

He also was the head coach of the swim team, winning the city championship title for 27 years. He inspired swimmers and worked patiently to develop confidence in each team member. Jeff also coached the soccer team, leading the way to more city championships. On top of teaching and coaching, he ran the Science Olympics, participated in school functions and was a member on many committees like Advanced Placement and PD. Former student Kirby Feng says, “Jeff Goldie has touched so many of us over the decades. Merely mentioning his name (Goldie) to any of his students brings a sense of respect, awe and love for a person who gave so much to each and every one of us.” Another former student Utkarsh Chauhan says, “Mr. Goldie is like the Dumbledore of Scona.”

Edith Mitchell, Drama Teacher, Jasper Place School

The time, dedication and commitment Edith puts into the drama department is outstanding. She leads the improvisation club, One Acts and the school year-end play. “She is passionate about her students and makes Jasper Place a great place for drama students,” says curriculum coordinator Anne Lambert.

Most notably, last year she created the fantastic production of *Daisy Pulls it Off*. Her leadership was inspiring to everyone. From day one, she created a professional, respectful and fun environment. She mentored students and fostered community within the cast, crew and school. She dedicated her time, attending rehearsals two to three times a week at the beginning of the year, to five to six times a week as performance night neared. She brought together students from different programs to work together and create mutual respect for each other’s talents, like bringing in construction students and staff to build the set and dance students and staff to help choreograph.

The sold-out play was nominated for eight Cappies awards, including best play. About 180 high school students reviewed the plays and made their nominations for various awards like best play, best set of best costumes. These nominations not only brought distinction to Jasper Place’s performance arts program but also gave cast members a chance to perform an excerpt of the play on the Citadel Theatre stage at the Cappies Gala. For the young actors, this was an exciting experience. A student says, “I owe so much to the growth of my acting and the enjoyment of my high school years to the hard work of Mrs. Mitchell.”

Robin Moser, Department Head - Fine Arts, Queen Elizabeth School

“Robin leads by example and is well respected by students and peers,” says teacher Wendy Ionnaides. She encourages and empowers students, teachers and staff to express themselves effectively by listening, taking all questions seriously, organizing events and asking thought-provoking questions. She finds and creates authentic opportunities to showcase student work and to help them make connections in the larger art community.

Robin developed the Create in 8 event where students had eight hours to create a series of projects. She planned a multi-school event called the Ghandi Conference where students created collaborative art pieces on a theme about bridging differences. Robin also helped organize the district’s annual art auction and ensured her students participated. With her peers, she used a shared art journal to communicate and share ideas with other art teachers in the District. Robin contributed to catchment professional learning by sharing her work around the power of visual journals. Social studies and ELL teachers learned how journaling could reduce barriers and help create a means for expressing understanding of course content. In fact, Robin collaborated with ELL teachers to create materials and activities tiered for language learners at different levels.

She also coached the swim team that advanced to provincial competitions; this team was highly inclusive as she mentored three students new to Canada who had never entered a pool before. Robin was also the advisor to the grad committee and helped with many other school activities (like helping to create set designs).

She has inspired, encouraged and engaged hundreds of students to reach their full potential. Student Vanessa Traub says, “I don’t think I would be where I am now if it wasn’t for the effort, time and care Ms. Moser has put into me.”

Zenia Nemish, Principal, Brookside School

Principal Nemish is well respected. “Zenia is a leader who all teachers, as well as students, hope to have as a guiding figure and role model,” says teacher Dee Panickar. Her guidance, leadership skills and perseverance are forefront in making her staff a unified group. She truly understands the importance of leadership and mentoring, and how this can impact the quality of teaching among her staff. She emulates the expectations she places on educators.

Zenia is a committed leader who encourages staff to continue their learning with professional development, while also expanding her skills as both a principal and an educator. Her exemplary leadership is contagious. She encourages collaboration and enhances the school environment. She is a steadfast supporter for inclusive learning and also ensure staff are equipped to provide programming for exceptional students.

“Principal Nemish is very supportive of all council activities and encourages events to help build and maintain a community,” says parent Priya Nelson. “She makes efforts to ensure students feel a part of the school community.” She takes the initiative to learn the names of all students. Zenia can be seen welcoming students and parents first thing each morning and saying goodbye at the end of each day. As you walk through the school hallways, there is a sense of pride.

Recognition of Merit *continued*

Benito Velasco, Custodian, Harry Ainlay School

Benito is extremely well respected and he models equity, collaboration and integrity. His dedication and passion is infectious. His leadership is key to the operation and maintenance of the school environment and safety of students, staff and visitors. Assistant Principal Jones says, “Benito manages his staff in a manner that supports district cornerstone values.” He takes pride in his work and holds himself accountable for using his leadership skills to get the work done.

With multiple rentals and school events occurring seven days a week, schedules and priorities change continuously. Benito effectively works with administration and custodial staff to ensure a high quality environment is maintained. His organization skills and willingness to adapt to different situations is appreciated and respected. Benito also anticipates upcoming events and plans ahead to ensure success of events.

He is always working on strategies to improve cleanliness and target areas of the school that need extra attention. “He does all this with a smile on his face,” says teacher Steven Risselada. Teacher Brent Pederson says, “He is always ready to go above and beyond the call of duty.”

Jolene Warawa, Educational Assistant, Waverley School

Jolene is a strong advocate for inclusion. She worked with a Grade 2 student, Damyn, with significant medical, physical and learning challenges. She was instrumental in creating a positive and supportive school experience for Damyn. She went above and beyond when preparing resources and activities related to classroom themes/projects to support the student’s unique needs. Much of the preparation took place on her spare time and using her own resources.

“She created a day packed with new discoveries, emerging skills and opportunities for Damyn to interact with his peers,” says teacher Nora Van Thournout. Once Damyn accomplished one of his IPP goals, Jolene would already be thinking of next steps and challenges. She was quick to implement suggestions from consultants and readily offered feedback about the effectiveness of the suggestions. She was collaborative with the teacher and other educational assistant, helping to create a caring team atmosphere. She also stayed in close contact with the student’s mother and embodies the idea of wrap-around service. For instance, when Damyn’s mom couldn’t attend an adapted bike fitting day, Jolene arranged to take Damyn on a field trip that day so he wouldn’t miss out.

“To see him doing everything from feeding himself and drinking out of normal cup to pedalling a bike and doing crafts was overwhelming,” says parents Ken and Fleur Smith.

“His improved fine motor skills was a testament to her dedication.”

Corey Whaley, Music Teacher, M.E. LaZerte School

Corey teaches band, choral, contemporary, drum line and jazz band. Both jazz band and drum line are taught after school two days a week. “The popularity of these two programs has flourished because of his dedication,” says Debra Smith. “Mr. Whaley has ensured the development of the music program has been in the forefront,” says student Ericka Thomas. He was integral in having students attend festivals, clinics performances both at and outside of the school.

He constantly puts the needs of the students first, ensuring each student has reached their full potential. He adjusts the learning environment to accommodate the needs of students. He helps students improve their proficiency on their primary instrument but also helps expand their music experience by teaching them how to play a new instrument.

Corey is a member of the Music Parents Association of LaZerte (MPAL). Working closely with MPAL, he provided extensive knowledge and expertise of what is required to support and expand the music program. This partnership facilitated the addition of a drum line program and the upgrading of instruments and equipment for the music program. Denise Hugman, president of MPAL, says, “He is a positive role model and mentor. His creative talents, strong work ethic and ability to motivate and inspire others allows students to achieve beyond their expectations.”

Thank You.

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The initiatives undertaken by the District's staff, students, parents and other community members have a positive impact on our children and our community, and help to create the leaders of tomorrow.

We acknowledge all of the nominees for their contributions and achievements. Individually, you are both inspiring and accomplished. Collectively, you are helping to build a brighter future.

Brian O'Neill

*Director
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