

**WELCOME TO
EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J
2018 ACE AWARDS**



**May 23, 2018
Churchill High School**





Churchill High School
Wednesday, May 23, 2018
5:30–7:00 p.m.

5:30

Reception

Music by 7:05 Jazz

6:00

Awards Ceremony

Performance by

Downing Street Singers

Introduction

Jennifer Winters, Emcee

Welcome Remarks

Dr. Gustavo Balderas, Superintendent

Program Notes

Jennifer Winters, Emcee

Awards Presentation

Dr. Gustavo Balderas, Superintendent

Eileen Nittler, Board Chair

2018 ACE Award: Administrator

2018 ACE Award: Classified

2018 ACE Award: Volunteer

2018 ACE Award: Teacher

2018 ACE Award: Lifetime Achievement

Good Night

Jennifer Winters, Emcee

ABOUT THE ACE AWARDS

Eugene School District 4J has exceptional staff and volunteers who make a difference for students every day. A Champion in Education (ACE) Awards honor 4J employees and volunteers who have been nominated by students, parents and colleagues for their excellence in education.

ACE Nomination Categories

Administrator

This category recognizes administrators, managers, professional staff and supervisors for their steadfast commitment to the development of both staff and students, their encouragement of staff to create environments where students love learning, their advocacy for the school, the district and education, and contributions to the community.

Classified

This category includes office managers and other clerical support, educational assistants, bus drivers, food service workers, custodians and other classified employees. It recognizes them for their support of the education mission, their dedication to enhancing the student experience through collaboration and communication and their commitment to fostering a safe and positive school environment.

Volunteer

Volunteers play an invaluable role in our schools. This category includes anyone who consistently contributes time and/or resources on a volunteer basis to a school and demonstrates dedication to supporting students' needs through encouragement, mentorship and inspiration, addressing significant needs of the school, and helping to connect the school with the community.

Teacher

This category recognizes teachers and licensed specialists, such as counselors and nurses, for their commitment to guiding students to reach their full potential, leading both through instruction and teamwork, and effectively communicating with and positively influencing both the school community and the community at large.

Lifetime Achievement

This award honors an individual (often, but not necessarily, at or nearing retirement) who has dedicated their career to supporting and strengthening education and helping students grow, thrive and reach their fullest potential.

2018 ACE AWARD NOMINEES



Administrator

Eric Anderson, *Principal, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

“Eric Anderson is an organizational leader and team player. His office is a safe place to go and he sets the tone for the entire school. Students and parents feel safe with Eric. They know they’ll be heard and that their needs are important. Eric is a role model in displaying tolerance and acceptance.”

Kevin Gordon, *Principal, Adams Elementary School*

“Kevin is always reaching above and beyond to help both students and families achieve the best that they can achieve. He is extremely present and encourages students and staff to communicate for the greatest common good for all.”

Tyler Hebard, *Payroll & Accounts Payable Supervisor, Finance Department*

“Tyler is an excellent leader and a great team player. He encourages us to try every new idea and then supports us if things go wrong. I have grown in my abilities under his supervision, mostly because he builds us up and challenges us to be our best.”

Teresa Martindale, *Assistant Principal, Madison Middle School*

“Teresa has made herself an anchor for those in rough waters. Students and families know that she is their advocate, and the depth of their relationships with her speak to the high level of trust and safety Teresa has created with them. Her fun-loving nature brings us all back to the simple fact that we love middle school kids and are grateful to do what we do.”

Mike Riplinger, *Principal, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

“Staff, parents, and kids just love Mr. Rip. His leadership style has brought the staff together into a happy and strong unit. He greets kids each morning at the drop-off circle and parents comment on how much they love his presence and smile each day. Mike makes work fun, and when work is fun we all work better.”

Joyce Smith-Johnson, *Principal, Holt Elementary School*

"Joyce is a hard working, organized and goal-oriented principal. She works hard to develop potential in students and staff. Joyce is a team player and makes her presence known on all areas of leadership in the building, offering guidance and assistance whenever it's needed. She is a true champion in education and shines as the leader of our school."

Rhonda Stewart, *Executive Assistant, Technology Department*

"Rhonda had over thirty years with 4J, coming up through the ranks from bus driver to executive assistant for a department director. She sought to improve herself and always supported her colleagues. She was on a mission to help, and her steady rock-like personality coupled with a deliciously dry sense of humor made it fun to work with her. She was uncrushable in spirit. She held us together."

Denisa Taylor, *Principal, Chávez Elementary School*

"Denisa is an amazing administrator, who always puts the kids first. You will often find her in the office sharing her work space with students. She makes everyone feel welcome, and often goes above and beyond for many students on a daily basis. She sees the potential in all students' success. Thank you for making Chávez great!"

John Wayland, *Assistant Principal, Kelly Middle School*

"John is laying the foundation for a community environment at Kelly that will enhance its expectations, academics and support. I have heard him asking students the same question of how are they supporting the school, their class, classmates or themselves. To work for a leader who is focused on the whole school is amazing."

Classified

Peggy Blair, *Campus Supervisor & Read Right Specialist, Monroe Middle School*

"Peggy's experience and talent gives her the ability to see the big picture and have meaningful and insightful input. She develops a quick rapport with even the most challenging students, and establishes an encouraging and positive environment. Peggy's investment and dedication is unmatched."

Kathy Bruegman, *Educational Assistant, Gilham Elementary School*

"Kathy has established herself as a leader on the Gilham Life Skills team by noticing areas of need and working to fill them. She's always focused on what's best for her students. She is a true champion in education."

Racheal Bryant, *Educational Assistant, Monroe Middle School*

"Racheal is constantly going above and beyond. She makes every effort to find fun and innovative ways to connect students with the content and is never afraid to be silly with the students. Her positive attitude and kind nature is infectious!"

Micah Champion, *Bus Driver, Transportation Department*

"Micah has been an absolute model of a school bus driver—engaging positively with his students when they seem down. As an accomplished artist, he has been known to draw cartoons for his kids that exhibit positive and outstanding behavior on the bus. He is so calm, positive, and just plain nice that the kids adore him."

Vincent Colmenares, *Bus Driver, Transportation Department*

"Vincent relates well to his students and does a phenomenal job with student management. Let's be honest, driving a school bus might just be the hardest job within our system. Vincent handles it daily with grace, enthusiasm and a smile on his face. A nicer driver you will not find!"

Steve Dent, *Bus Driver, Transportation Department*

"Steve is very kind and cares about the students on his bus. My daughter can be very forgetful sometimes. Steve is always finding her stuff and saving it for her. Whenever I have something to communicate with him he always listens and lets me talk. Steve never makes me feel like he doesn't have time to listen."

Keith Fjordbeck, *Lead Custodian, Churchill High School*

"Keith always responds quickly to any type of need, is so resourceful and helpful with trouble-shooting, and does it all with a pleasant attitude and a smile. He's polite, humble and very helpful. What Keith does every day directly impacts students' learning experience, keeping their school safe, clean and healthy. Couldn't do it without him."

Tiny Galago, *Student Supervision Assistant, Churchill High School*

"Tiny started the Pacific Islanders Student Union at Churchill High School. The club has strengthened the Pacific Islander community in Eugene and the surrounding community. The values and character building that Tiny aims to instill in the Pacific Islander students is evident on their smiling faces every day at school."

Lynne Given, *School Secretary, International High School at Churchill*

"Not only is Lynne just an awesome person to be around, she is also so well organized and able to keep track of hundreds of students' schedules and information so that she can help them be a successful student. Lynne is always there for you with a helping hand and a smile on her face. Even if we thank her every day, it's not enough. She is truly something special, and we couldn't do it without her."

Lisa Goff, *Educational Assistant, Holt Elementary School*

"Ms. Lisa, as we call her, is possibly the most accomplished EA I've ever had the pleasure to work with. She demonstrates excellence in all arenas: working with students, working with teachers, and spreading her cheer and positive energy across the school. Lisa is an outstanding human being who would bring honor to this prestigious award."

Vicki Gotchall, *Educational Assistant, Gilham Elementary School*

"Vicki is key to the success of the Learning Center and the After School Assistance Program at Gilham. Her help ensures many students make progress in reading and math. Vicki is wholeheartedly involved in the academic welfare of students at Gilham."

Perla Grado, *School Secretary, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Perla brings expertise, efficiency, kindness and a wonderful outlook to her work, and to all the extra work she takes on for the sake of the children. Thank you, Perla, for helping all students know they are welcome and valued at our school each day!"

Brian Gregory, *Bus Driver, Transportation Department*

"Mr. B. is a great bus driver because he really cares about the students and wants to make sure that they have a safe and sound trip to school. The kids can talk to him anytime and he has made the bus a better place by putting the students' needs first."

Gary Henager, *Bus Driver, Transportation Department*

"Gary greets every child by name as they climb on the bus, with a smile and such enthusiasm. Our daughter has days when she doesn't want to go to school, until she sees Gary smiling down and greeting her. Then she happily hops on board!"

Rich InLove, Bus Driver, Transportation Department

"Rich goes above and beyond the expectations of a bus driver. He communicates effectively with school staff. He is continually trying to problem solve and collaborate to make the bus experience positive and successful for our kids who have special needs."

Mike Jackson, Fleet Mechanic II, Transportation Department

"Mike has spent his career at 4J making sure that our vehicles are safe and ready to transport students and facilities workers. His quiet devotion to his work has meant that he's somewhat 'flown under the radar,' but that makes him even more deserving of this honor, especially as he will be retiring this year."

Julia Johnson, Outreach & Recovery Coordinator, Eugene Education Options

"Julia's work for our district is making a significant difference for the most disenfranchised and vulnerable students and families in our system. She finds them and then works with the student, family and school to eliminate barriers and provide bridges to school access. When asked 'When do we say enough is enough, and give up on a kid?', Julia is famous for answering 'Never.'"

Jane Kinports, Records & Scheduling Assistant, Roosevelt Middle School

"Whether helping a parent at the front desk, assisting with attendance, listening intently to a student in need of support, or attending to students' medical needs, Jane frequently plays multiple roles, all of which support and encourage students to reach their full potential. The Roosevelt community has benefited greatly from Jane's tremendous dedication and strong work ethic."

Teresa Koepf, Bus Driver, Transportation Department

"Teresa has been a role model, mentor and bus driver for 11 years. Mrs. T., as she is fondly known, has taught safety, patience, kindness and respect to all students that she encounters. Because of her high standards, the drivers she has mentored have excelled. The example she provides is positive, firm and understanding."

Debora Kovensky, Educational Assistant, Roosevelt Middle School

"Debora seems to possess a natural ability to connect with students who are struggling. Whether she is providing organizational assistance with a student's binder, a positive comment at a moment when most needed, or even a pencil, Debora has shown herself to be a compassionate educator who truly strives to support the success of all students at Roosevelt."

Katie Mackey, *School Secretary, Holt Elementary School*

"Katie is, without a doubt, the heart of Holt Elementary School. She is a tireless worker, caring, and always looking for a way to help students reach their full potential. Her attention to detail is outstanding and she always finds the time to lend an ear to those who need it or to offer advice. We all love and adore her!"

Nick Moore, *Vocational Training Assistant, Student Services Department*

"Nick works skillfully and tirelessly with our adjudicated youth, helping to support them into and through our schools and programs. He is a problem solver and a barrier-reducing advocate for our communities' youth. We could all learn a lot from Nick about loving and caring for our young people."

Jeremy Niccum, *Custodial Maintenance Coordinator II, Kelly Middle School*

"Jeremy is a great example of A Champion in Education walking the halls everyday for students. He has quickly made improvements to the school to make everyday life work better. The best part is that no matter what he is doing or helping with, he has this upbeat way about him that just can't help but brighten your day."

Heather Penfold, *Educational Assistant, Twin Oaks Elementary School*

"Heather is so thoughtful and caring while working with her kindergartners. No matter what type of day she has had, she always has a smile on her face and a positive attitude. I cannot imagine a better person to entrust the wellbeing of my children with."

Mary Peterson, *Educational Assistant, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Mary encourages students to have fun while they learn and focus on what they can do, not what they cannot do. Since she works so well with students and encourages their personal learning, she is very much in demand. She is a quiet soul who never wants this type of attention but it is time she is acknowledged for her many years of outstanding service."

Jeanette Prior, *Educational Assistant, Chávez Elementary School*

"Jeanette works with our youngest learners and loves them like her own. She has a great work ethic and will go above and beyond for anybody in the building. She is loved and respected by students, staff and parents. We need a Jeanette in every building."

Samantha Russell, *Educational Assistant, Gilham Elementary School*

"Samantha has been the rock in our classroom this past year. She is always giving her all for our students. They adore Samantha to the point they are yelling across the playground for Samantha to come and play! She always has a smile on her face and everyone who comes across her lights up."

Melanie Schwarte, *School Secretary, Holt Elementary School*

"Melanie is an outstanding school secretary who places students' needs first. She is encouraging and kind. Our students seek her out, looking to her for comfort and guidance. She is patient and kind with both our staff and students. She is the face of Holt, which makes us all so very proud."

Abe Smith, *Program Coordinator Assistant, Fox Hollow Campus*

"Abe has demonstrated an exceptional ability and willingness to serve kids and support those who do. His blend of humor, calm and professionalism make him ideally suited for this front-line position. He builds relationships that enable him to soothe and motivate students. Kids love Abe. He finds the good in each kid and helps them to see it within themselves."

Ethan Tibbs, *Educational Assistant, Gilham Elementary School*

"Mr. Ethan is a valuable member of the Gilham community. He is flexible and always willing to help. He challenges our high-achievers in reading skills groups and supports struggling students in small groups. He is a consistent presence around our school and role model to our students."

Alexander Zuniga, *Bicultural/Bilingual Office Support, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Alex encourages all of our students to reach their full potential by supporting not only each individual student but also their families and teachers. He encourages a spirit of fun and enjoyment at our school, regularly telling jokes and helping students and staff to laugh and remember the joy that exists in a sometimes challenging profession."

Volunteer

Danielle Bowerman, *Gilham Elementary School*

"Danielle has spent tireless hours learning what our kids love to read, searching for ways to keep the library collection current and meaningful, and creatively making the library and the building-at-large a beautiful space. I can't imagine the Gilham community without her. She is a true Champion in Education."

Heidi Dixon, *River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School and Spencer Butte Middle School*

"As co-coach of the El Camino after-school Lego Robotics team, Heidi made robotics fun and accessible for all students no matter their home language, ethnicity, race or poverty level. They could be who they were while learning tons of skills. She brought spirit and cohesion."

Sharon Docherty, *Arts & Technology Academy*

"Sharon has transformed the ATA library into an accessible, inviting and updated place. She has an unfailing knack for picking books middle school students *want* to read—no small feat in a digitized world. Rarely does a student leave the library without a book, and rarely does a week go by without a student asking, 'Can we go to the library this week?'"

Steve Evans, *Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Steve has a sincere love for Awbrey Park kids and wants them all to succeed. I remember Steve sitting with one of my kindergartners, helping her glue feathers, sequins and glitter on her Thanksgiving Turkey. He helped the little girl feel proud and positive about herself. He is always willing to step up to help our school and kids in any way he can."

Laura Fuhriman, *Roosevelt Middle School*

"Laura has gone way above the call of duty for Roosevelt's performance department. A typical Laura story would involve her apologizing for not being a 'professional' designer and then coming up with costume designs that are completely professional! Laura's cheerful willingness to put in so many hours has created a far richer experience for our students."

Barbara George, *Chávez Elementary School*

"Barbara is a very important person to the children and staff at Chávez. For the past six years, she has coordinated an extremely large SMART Program at our school. Barbara skillfully matches students with readers, which requires a careful look at each individual student. Kind, warm, energetic and enthusiastic, are all words that come to mind when I think of Barbara."

Amy Green, *River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School*

"Amy brings true professional attributes to El Camino del Río and genuinely cares about helping our community. She easily cultivates relationships with students, teachers and parents. Amy actively participates in meetings, events and fundraising at the school. She is motivated and positively engaged, serving as a true inspiration."

Jenelle Hunt, *Edgewood Elementary School and Spencer Butte Middle School*

"When I was in fifth grade, Jenelle asked me to read part of my book to her. When I finished, she told me about another book that I could read. I smiled every time I saw her because she gave me the title of the best book ever, "The Westing Game". She makes people realize that they are truly amazing and that they belong."

Bob Jones, *Edison Elementary School*

"Mr. Bob has been an exceptional volunteer for the past three years. His love of learning is inspirational to the students, while his positive and playful outlook makes learning fun. He has earned the trust and devotion of the students. Mr. Bob goes above and beyond the roles and duties of a volunteer; he contributes to the culture of our classroom."

Mia Kubu, *Gilham Elementary School*

"Mia is a huge support to our fifth grade team and all our students. She teaches a math group and volunteers to chaperone field trips and help out with grade-level parties. She is integral to organizing our final 5th grade field trip. She also helps run the auction, which is one of Gilham's main fundraising events. She does it all!"

Alice Lin, *McCornack Elementary School*

"Miss Alice has volunteered for nearly 20 years in 4J elementary schools, teaching students how to read, learn math, and speak well. Students benefit from her expertise in reading a child's emotion, her ability to build creative capacity in transforming students and changing lives one student at a time. We consider her a 'child whisperer!'"

Brian Petersen, *Spring Creek Elementary School*

"It is hard to think of anything that Brian doesn't do! He is able to know the right moment to help a student who is struggling academically or just needs a word of encouragement to keep moving forward. Students can feel his genuine caring, and benefit from the warmth and patience he brings."

Jessica Rasmussen, *Family School and Arts & Technology Academy*

"Jessica has been at Family School for seven years contributing her time and energy, and asking for nothing in return, but to be a positive contributing member of our community. With her enthusiasm, and her gentle and calm nature, she is able to help so many of our families connect with our school community."

Kalleen Stoddard, *Gilham Elementary School*

"Kalleen works with our top math students and helps them reach their full potential. She also is a top volunteer who helps plan special events, chaperones field trips, grades papers and makes copies. She impacts the entire 5th grade class and teachers with all her help, organization, knowledge and positive attitude. She's the best!"

Tiffany Wright, *Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Tiffany volunteers countless hours each week to run our school library. She has helped kids find books they love, which engages them in reading for joy. Tiffany keeps things organized and is knowledgeable about the latest popular books. We have the privilege of having a fabulous library due to her dedication."

Teacher

Margaret Albright, *Counselor, Spencer Butte Middle School*

"Margaret's dedication to students and her craft is evident as you witness the way she communicates and connects with students, honoring who they are, their diversity and intelligence. She is passionate about affirming student identity to build resilience and pushing students to excel. Her work embodies educational excellence—a hungry mind, a humble heart and a helpful hand."

Katharine Ankeny, *Speech-Language Pathologist, Holt Elementary School*

"Katharine guides students to reach their full potential. She addresses issues immediately and works to resolve them. During meetings she is always clear, calm, thorough, and invites open communication with parents, teachers and students. All of my students in speech made great progress over the year with Katharine's support and encouragement."

Ashley Baker, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion Elementary School*

"Because of Ashley's leadership, expertise, and overall kindness and compassion, my student now loves school. As a parent, having this amount of care and support has made us feel so much more confident and able to help our student with academics at home. I would describe this parent/teacher relationship as a true partnership."

Kimberly Brown, *First Grade Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Kimberly is an amazing advocate for all children! She researches how best to meet each child's needs every day, by reading, observing, and talking with other teachers and support staff. She also has a goofy sense of humor, and she brings out a bit of silliness in even the most serious of her students."

Adrienne Carlson, *Fifth Grade Teacher, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

"The tone that Adrienne has set—one of acceptance and openness, rather than judgment and discrimination—ripples throughout the rest of the school community, making it easier for other students to be true to themselves. This has positively influenced the school community, with far-reaching positive consequences."

Meg Carnagey, *First Grade Teacher, Adams Elementary School*

"Ms. Meg fosters a love of learning and community, a sense of belonging and acceptance, and the key virtue of kindness every day. In her classroom, students have a voice, practice listening, and participate in so many group and hands-on projects. Ms. Meg is loved by her students and families alike."

Sebastian Catlin, *Student Support Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Sebastian works with a most extraordinary group of students: those who many find impossible to impact and reach. Sebastian knows how to get the information train rolling for students. He is the everyday hero you want in schools. Kids come to school because they know he will be there for them. South Eugene High School is a better place because of Sebastian Catlin."

Patrick Chesterman, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Patrick makes education come alive for students. He is caring, positive, creative, funny, dynamic, and kids really learn when they are in his class. He is always finding different ways to get kids excited about learning. The sense of community that Patrick has built is amazing. His class is really just one big family."

Lisa Chinn, *Physical Education Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Lisa is a fantastic teacher. She is the heart of Awbrey Park. She energizes, excites, cajoles, supports, entices and does whatever she can to teach kids how to live a healthy life through exercise. She is always willing to do whatever she can to make our school better and to help our students have the best educational experience possible."

Tom Di Liberto, *Spanish Immersion Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"Tom has taught for many years and has always been looked upon as a great and inspiring teacher. Students and parents are impressed by his talents as a teacher and those who have younger children and know of his retirement this year are saddened by the loss their younger children will have without him being there to teach them."

Kwasi Diehl, *Special Education Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"Kwasi is one of the first teachers to arrive in the morning and the last to leave, taking his time both outside of school and during school to make sure students have what they need to be successful. He clearly cares about students and sees what he does not only as a job, but as part of who he is."

Dene Eller, *Physical Education Teacher, Edgewood Elementary School and Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Certainly a feather in 4J's cap, Dene is caring, kind and puts all of her focus and energy into every moment, nourishing the school, the district and the individuals in it. She has unstoppable positive momentum and the kids can't help but want to get swept up in it. Her warmth and compassion are changing lives, and I strongly recommend her for this award."

Jack Fertal, *Math Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"One will not find another teacher as passionate about what he does as Jack! He shows his passion by taking the time to adopt different types of learning styles so each student will understand the concepts that are being taught. I hear many staff members say how much they admire his style of teaching, which is uniquely amazing."

Daniel Gallo, *Social Studies & Health Teacher, Eugene International High School*

"Daniel tirelessly works to make his lessons engaging, relevant, rigorous, fun and high quality. He sees each student as a whole person, and puts their emotional, physical and academic health into perspective as he guides them through the lessons. Daniel truly cares about creating a community that thrives with positivity and where students make memories to last a lifetime."

Katie Gates, *Special Education Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Katie is always working to improve and develop appropriate curriculum for all students she is involved with. She goes above and beyond with her students to find out how they learn best. She then places things in the curriculum to keep them interested and have fun. Katie makes us all want to serve students better."

Laura Harris, *First/Second Grade Teacher, Edison Elementary School*

"Laura is an outstanding teacher. Every time I'm lucky enough to visit her class, there is such a positive energy in the room shared by staff, volunteers and students. Laura challenges the students with whole class educational games to acquire new thinking skills and broader concepts. Any child is lucky to be in her class."

Carisa Henniger, *Kindergarten Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Carisa shows love and support to my child when she needs it most and always tells me we are a team. I can't say enough positive things about this woman. My daughter told me she really loves her. She cares about all children and does whatever she can to help them grow and learn."

Rae Heselbach, *Special Education Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Rae is one of the kindest, greatest, most selfless teachers I have ever met! She puts the kids' needs first, before hers. It takes a lot of work, skill and heart to do what Rae does every day. Rae really does give that extra little sparkle to the kids' lives. She is a rare gem."

Jeff Hess, *Physical Education & English Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Jeff is a master teacher of English, physical education and health education. Jeff's teaching style and passion for education are keys to the amazing teacher he is. He enables underserved populations of students to become more than they ever thought possible. Students rave about their experiences because of Jeff. I am proud to be his colleague and friend."

Brian Holte, *Language Arts Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"Brian is a great teacher who encourages us to engage in class. He gives kids a place to hang out if they need it, lets kids have a room to work in if it's too loud in the main one. He's a great teacher and I've learned so much from him. I'm so thankful. By far he's my favorite teacher."

Christie Hoogendoorn, *First Grade Teacher, Camas Ridge Elementary School*

"Christie is an instructional leader, team player and excellent communicator. I've seen Christie go out of her way to help guide and explain appropriate behavior to students while interacting with adults. This is something that I think is not necessarily expected of teachers but is very important."

Eric Johannsen, *Health Education Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Eric has a gift for providing students relevant and rigorous curriculum in a highly engaging manner. His greatest attribute as an instructor is his ability to engage students and achieve a classroom environment in which all students can be successful. Additionally, the excitement and school pride Coach Eric creates through the track program has a positive impact on school climate."

Maggie Jones, *Second Grade Teacher, Holt Elementary School*

"Maggie is one of the most hardworking teachers I know, willing to spend countless hours committing to her profession. She is knowledgeable, thoughtful and kind. Her hard work is reflected by her class's tremendous growth both academically and socially. Maggie always has a calm demeanor and voice that reflects authority and kindness."

Sara Justice, *First Grade Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Mrs. Justice inspires her students every day to reach their best selves. She encourages students to learn in fun and creative ways. The learning in her classroom is measurable. Additionally, Mrs. Justice emphasizes a safe, inclusive classroom and this is embedded in the reflections that my student shares with me."

Kyle Kordon, *Science Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Mr. Kordon's energy, passion and dedication to teaching shows in how he runs his class: the students feel safe, secure and willing to try new topics with the belief that they can be successful. He has also worked around the clock to improve the culture of our school. He listens, he questions, he inspires, he reflects, he leads, he teaches—our students learn and our community grows together because he is our champion."

Joel Kuiper, *Special Education Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Mr. Kuiper prepares his special education students for a successful adulthood. He is cultivating compassion and active involvement in helping others. Such character building is extremely valuable in education. Mr. Kuiper understands the essence of education and actively realizes it in his students. I admire and respect him from the bottom of my heart."

Debra Lydum, *Special Education Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Debra embraces lots of kids at Kelly that have a wide array of issues. She treats the kids so well and *always* communicates in a timely manner whenever I have a question. She has played such a positive part in my student's success. Simply put, she is amazing!"

Kelly McGhehey, *Counselor, Early College and Career Options (ECCO)/Eugene Education Options*

"Kelly is a kid-first person and a consummate advocate for student needs. ECCO has a diverse population of students, many of whom suffer from trauma in their past, and Kelly has taken it on herself to learn more about supporting students through trauma, so that they can be more successful."

Jason Miller, *Language Arts Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Mr. Miller has made a huge positive impact on my student's sixth grade career. She has autism and we were truly blessed that she ended up with the fabulous hurricane of a personality that Mr. Miller is. His gentle pushing and guidance has helped her grow confident and believe she can be more than she thought she could be."

Tommy Morrow, *Math & Science Teacher, Kennedy Middle School*

"Mr. Morrow provides challenges when needed to keep students engaged. He is happy, funny, and always willing to meet with parents and students as needed. He has a positive relationship with the other staff members at Kennedy, which goes a long way in helping foster a safe and caring school environment."

Chris Mudd, *Music Teacher, Churchill High School*

"It is said that 'the proof is in the pudding' and in this case the pudding is a combination of Chris's daily classes, band concerts, pep band for athletics, music technology classes and after school productions. In each case his students clearly perform at high levels and they walk away with a sense of satisfaction from a job well done. The man is a machine!"

Pat Nickerson, *Special Education Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Pat has been the teacher to crack the math code for my sixth grade student. Math has always been an elusive puzzle, but Pat has made math make sense for the first time in her life. He has created ways to make math interesting and understandable. We then found out he was retiring and just about cried!"

Aurelie Noble, *Second Grade Teacher, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

"Aurelie possesses the clarity of vision, depth of knowledge, and great fortitude that it takes to teach today's students and help lead a school through these challenging times of change and reform. Her intelligence, critical eye for detail, engaging personality and genuine care for individuals in her life make her an incredibly exceptional educator, wonderful colleague and friend."

Ian Ogden, *Language Arts Teacher, Churchill High School*

"Ian Ogden is not just a teacher, he's the head of an AVID family that is graduating after four years of his leadership, encouragement and unflagging commitment. He turned a bunch of kids, all with life and family challenges, into a group of comrades who *will* attend college, and always support each other."

Ashley Pond, *Second Grade Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Ms. Pond has created an environment where my once apprehensive and anxious child has become excited to attend school and thrives academically. She has always kept open and honest communication with me, while working with my child to ensure success. My child has made a 180-degree improvement and Ms. Pond is no doubt the reason for that."

Jennifer Potter, *Title 1 Coordinator, Holt Elementary School*

"Jenny is an inspiring leader not only for our Title 1 team, but the entire Holt staff as well. She challenges students with her grace and kindness, and is able to reach students who are frustrated—and, at times, defiant—and gives them tools to learn and increase their self-esteem. She is the voice of our students, our moral center, and our conscience."

Justin Potts, *School Psychologist, Student Services Department*

"With his gentle touch, Justin develops rapport with students, parents and teachers quickly. He goes the extra mile to connect with students and advise parents and teachers in a way so obstacles to learning seem easy to overcome. His commitment to the educational success of all students in his buildings, the district and the state, is a model for us all."

Dan Powell, *Music Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Mr. Powell is a funny, inspiring and motivating teacher. He really brings music to life for kids and makes learning and performing fun. He teaches that mistakes can happen and that's okay, that learning is fun, and to have respect for the teacher and each other. He is a joy and should be celebrated for the wonderful influence he has on all of these kids!"

Ashley Reich, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Holt Elementary School*

"Ashley brings so much energy, optimism and encouragement into our school. Her smile can lift up anyone's day—and between her light-up shoes, custom-sayings t-shirts and outgoing attitude, her positivity is instantly contagious. Ashley is the type of teacher and coworker that these awards were made for. She deserves to be recognized publicly for what she does so naturally and proudly."

Taylor Reineke, *Math Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Mr. Reineke has, in less than one year, shifted the mindset and outlook that my son has toward math entirely, and I know he has done the same for many others. He has helped develop bigger character traits than just math skills, including perseverance, problem-solving and resilience."

Pam Reynolds, *First Grade Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Pam has been a fantastic asset to Awbrey Park. She is a wonderful reading teacher and will take extra time to make sure each student learns to read before leaving first grade. She always seems to have what you need tucked away in her classroom. Her willingness to share and be a team player is going to be missed when she retires this year."

Alyssa Ricken, *Kindergarten Teacher, Adams Elementary School*

"Mrs. Ricken has been a wonderful influence on our son. The 'seating choice' has been great for our bouncy son. He has options to move around so he can focus without being distracting. She is so understanding and patient with all of the kindergartners."

Jason Robbins, *Special Education Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Jason's dedication to this community of students is top notch. His classroom is a break center for many kiddos who need a calm space and some encouragement to 'turn their day around.' I am constantly inspired by his patience level and his calm demeanor."

Ashley Robinson, *Math Teacher, Spencer Butte Middle School*

"Every day when I walk into Ashley's classroom I feel like I belong. It doesn't matter who walks in, she is always kind and respectful. She doesn't let hate into her classroom and it makes her classroom feel safe. Her classroom is always filled with kindness and respect."

Rebecca Robinson, *Third Grade Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Rebecca has gone out of her way to help my student by encouraging him, advocating for him, and tailoring his work to better serve him. I know she does this for all of her students. Rebecca's words and actions are encouraging. She believes in her students, which is evident in the way she speaks to them and how she makes them feel about themselves."

David Roderick, *Special Education Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"David is a compassionate educator who works diligently in support of his students. He capitalizes on students' interests and strengths, and designs individualized social skills instruction for his students that help them experience success. Parents of students in David's program have come to trust him as an advocate for their students' academic and social success."

Leah Roderick, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Gilham Elementary School*

"Ms. Roderick helps her students meet their full potential by designing both enrichments and interventions and by planning experiential learning activities. She is a master teacher and a tremendously positive member of the community. I am so very grateful to have Ms. Roderick as a member of the Gilham team. She is a true champion in education!"

Korrinne Ross, *Special Education Consultant, Student Services Department*

"To fully appreciate Korrinne, you have to see her with our families in the Learning Center. She is always prepared with everything for the meetings and has all the data and options, but what she really does best is communicate with kids and with families. Her warmth and humor, her honesty and encouragement, are unparalleled in my experience of 25 years in education."

Hollie Schultze, *Counselor, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Hollie exudes positivity. She is calm and positive with students and staff members and truly listens to demonstrate care. Hollie has a natural skill in communication with young persons regarding teenage life, difficult decisions, safety and relational aggression. Students love her and are open to sharing their struggles with her."

Adam Shepard, *Fourth/Fifth Grade Teacher, Edgewood Elementary School*

"Adam always welcomes everyone into his classroom and makes them feel like they belong. Adam has this special thing about his classroom that can only be described as one word: Kind. His classroom is always kind and respectful. He makes sure every student understands his rules and each other. Adam is a perfect teacher."

Beth Shershun, *First Grade Teacher, Camas Ridge Elementary School*

"Beth is the most patient, dedicated and caring teacher. It is wonderful to see how connected and involved each child is. She brings so much love to what she does every day. Her energy makes her classroom such a positive, calm and comforting place to be. Everybody has a place and fits in so well."

James Squires, *Third Grade Teacher, Gilham Elementary School*

"James consistently goes above and beyond what is required of him for his students. No matter how big or how small or what is going on in his life he is there for his kids! His communication with parents and dedication to his profession is unmatched."

Chris Stober, *Special Education Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Chris works diligently and thoughtfully to meet the individualized needs of his students. Chris has transformed his classroom into a hub for students to access a variety of resources, such as a much-needed snack, school supplies, or a quick pep talk to help a student through a tough moment. As a result of Chris's efforts, students working with him are able to participate more successfully in their school day."

Katherine Tierney, *Language Arts Teacher, Sheldon High School*

"Kate is a master teacher. She is not afraid to address tough societal issues in her classroom content and reading assignments. She is able to show up authentically for her students and hold space for the varying political positions of her students. I have never seen a teacher work as hard to reach each kid where they are at."

Catherine Wiebe, *French Immersion Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Catherine is a gifted and dedicated instructor who helps students reach their potential. She demonstrates creative instructional practice by using technology, as well as 'making student thinking visible' to maximize student engagement. Her students are lucky to have her in their corner!"

Bobbie Willis, *Journalism Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Bobbie is an exceptional educator and leader in our school. She is always encouraging the students who struggle most to stay invested and she helps them find ways to meet their potential. Bobbie is also a source of inspiration and support for the South staff. Her unwavering grace and professionalism are unparalleled, and she exemplifies the truest meaning of dedication and commitment to excellence."

Brandeis Zaklan, *Counselor, Gilham Elementary School*

"Brandeis provides great support and inspiration for all Gilham students, especially those in need of extra care. She assisted my son during Dr. Seuss week in making not just one character from Dr. Seuss, but *three* characters. She also made sure that his projects were photographed and stored in a safe place."

Lifetime Achievement Award

BJ Blake, Secondary Director, Instructional Department

"There is no one quite like BJ Blake. She is truly unforgettable and leaves a lasting impact on everyone she meets. She is devoted to building strong relationships and working collaboratively with colleagues, parents and the community; supporting rigorous and dynamic instructional programs; and always striving to provide outstanding educational experiences for all of our students. She does all of this with humor and humility, and brings out the best in all of us."

Diane Brock, School Secretary, Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion School

"Diane is truly irreplaceable as the front desk and behind-the-scenes go-to person helping YG run smoothly. Diane's many hats include the unofficial school nurse, counselor, tutor, mother, spirit committee and the voice of reason. She is always upbeat. Diane has this rare gift to make everyone feel welcome. Diane really is the nuts and bolts that hold the school together. We don't know what we're going to do without her next year!"

Harlan Coats, Director of Facilities, Facilities Department

"Harlan has shown his commitment to 4J for the past 37 years. He has been the constant presence in facilities and has been there to support his colleagues and develop the potential in others. He has been 4J's best advocate during his tenure. He has contributed to or overseen many of 4J's capital bond projects. He has guided and improved our 4J facilities over the years. His wisdom within our district and his institutional knowledge are unmatched. He does all this and more with unsurpassed skill, professionalism, dedication, grace, humility and a fabulous smile!"

Tom Di Liberto, Spanish Immersion Teacher, Monroe Middle School

"Mr. Di Liberto has dedicated his entire career to excellence in public education. His teaching methods help students achieve their goals and have fun in the process. He not only teaches the kids but more importantly he wants and encourages the kids to form their own ideas, to voice their opinions and to respect each other. He has made the Spanish immersion program special and it wouldn't be what it is today without his guidance and foresight. More than 30 years teaching at Monroe Middle School is quite an accomplishment. He will be missed dearly!"

Jason Miller, *Language Arts Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Jason is encouraging of all students. He refuses to allow any student to fail. He takes personal accountability and care for each student. His love of his school and his work is infectious. He creates a welcoming environment and all of his students really excel. He is a warm and compassionate teacher who volunteers with groups so students will always have a positive role model."

Ila Shapiro-Southworth, *Special Education Teacher, Student Services Department*

"Ila is a wonderful, kind and thoughtful teacher of special education. Her work with students, which she does with such love and ease, appears to be magical; however, there is a lot of hard work, time, and dedication that goes into this magic. Her methods are very intentional and the results are astounding. Students make considerable progress in social and emotional learning and in academics while under her instruction. She is firm in her belief that every child can succeed and thrive if you believe in them."

Craig Young, *Custodial Maintenance Coordinator I, River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School*

"Craig has been extremely dedicated to River Road/El Camino del Río and the generations of students who have passed through its halls. He has a deep understanding of how to build community and has played a major role in the strong sense of togetherness we enjoy at our school. Craig is fun, caring, kind and always willing to help students and staff. He is an intuitive systems thinker and has provided invaluable support to help our building run more smoothly. It's hard to imagine our school without Craig. He will be greatly missed when he retires after 38 years in 4J."



**To the amazing educators nominated for
the ACE Awards and to all the 4J staff and
volunteers who make a difference in the
lives of students every day:
Thank you!**



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