



2020 ACE Awards

A Champion in Education

Virtual Awards Ceremony
June 2, 2020
6 p.m.

Awards Presentation

Anne Marie Levis, Board Chair
Dr. Gustavo Balderas, Superintendent

2020 ACE Award: Administrator

2020 ACE Award: Classified Staff

2020 ACE Award: Volunteer

2020 ACE Award: Teacher & Licensed Specialist

2020 ACE Award: Lifetime Achievement

Nominees are invited to participate in the ceremony via Zoom.

The ceremony will be live streamed on 4J's Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/4jschools

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 Staff

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 & Licensed Specialist

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.

2020 ACE AWARD NOMINEES



Administrators

Eric Anderson, Principal, Roosevelt Middle School

“Eric Anderson is one of the most thoughtful, collaborative, humble and inspirational administrators in Eugene 4J. Eric regularly goes above and beyond as a visionary leader for the school district. He has impacted the lives of many students and families in his 19 years of educational service, never letting go of his hope to ensure all students have equitable access to education.”

Sebastian Bolden, Principal, Spring Creek Elementary School

“Sebastian Bolden is adored and respected by all. He will always make time to visit with students and show how much he cares. He is willing to chat with concerned parents about any issue that arises. His kind and compassionate heart makes the kids look forward to spending time with him and make them feel valued. His passion for the quality of the learning environment for students at Spring Creek Elementary is shown in all he does.”

Allan Chinn, Principal, Howard Elementary School

“This nominee is the pinnacle of the classification for ‘principal.’ He has been with Howard Elementary as a student, teacher and, finally, the principal. He sometimes jokes that if he were to get a tattoo, he would get the school mascot—a roadrunner—because he is that devoted to this school and the kids and staff in it. I have rarely seen someone work a job they loved more and with as much kindness and passion as he exudes.”

Kevin Gordon, Principal, Camas Ridge Elementary School

“Kevin is a true leader and team player who makes everyone working under him and around him feel valued and important. He makes sure everyone is able to voice their opinions and feelings in a way they feel comfortable. Students want to be around him and noticed by him. There is a sense of calm when you are around him that everything is going to be taken care of and no one will be excluded.”

AJ Hruby, *Assistant Principal, Arts & Technology Academy*

"AJ is a treasure and a wonderful educator. My son would not be successful if it were not for AJ's influence and support. She is always willing to see the full picture of who my son is and how to approach him where he is, in the hope of getting him to the peak of his potential. She is the full package of what an educator should be: stern when needed, joyful and encouraging almost always, and truly invested in her students."

Holly Langan, *Director, Support Services Department*

"During the COVID-19 response, Holly has worked day and night to make sure the district is providing meals to students in all regions of the district. In the first five weeks that the district buildings were closed, her department served over 118,000 meals. If asked, Holly won't say she deserves this award. She will say she is just doing her job. However, I disagree with her mindset. She works countless hours to problem solve how to feed kids food that is both nutritious and enjoyable."

Joel Lavin, *Assistant Principal, South Eugene High School*

"Joel is a student-first administrator. He works with me with some of the more at-risk students and makes my job a thousand times easier. He sincerely has my back all the time and gives me the trust and freedom to be the best teacher I can be. He lifts me up when I am feeling tired or defeated by continually reminding me of the difference I am making and that I am doing a good job."

David Nelson, *System Network Specialist, Technology Department*

"David quietly, unassumingly and very effectively gets the job done. When his help is needed, he drops his other tasks and does what it takes to meet the need. When a problem needs to be solved, he delves in and figures it out. The public never sees David's work, except really they do—they see that websites and technology are functioning as they should, and that's often thanks to his efforts."

Karen Pérez-da Silva, *Equity, Instruction and Partnerships Administrator, Instruction Department*

"An exceptional leader walks humbly, communicates clearly and genuinely inspires others. This is Dr. Karen Pérez-da Silva elucidated perfectly. As a proud immigrant, Karen sees herself in everyone around her. She honors the challenges she encounters; those trials fuel her fire. But she also embodies the grace she's experienced, and she pays that grace forward within her community every day. Dr. Pérez epitomizes what is possible when passion and determination collide with intelligence and vision. Transformative changes take root and our communities thrive."

Michael Riplinger, *Principal, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Principal Riplinger has a way of making everyone want to be their best. He believes in you and makes you believe in yourself. For the staff, he leads by example then quietly steps aside so we can try it out, makes suggestions for the greater good and supports all our students. For our students, he is always available, kind, patient and calm. Mr. Rip wants students to really, really try. You gradually become that better 'you' that he always knew you could be."

Londa Rochholz, *Principal, McCornack Elementary School*

"Our principal is amazing! There is not a day that goes by she doesn't say, 'Put the kids first' and ask 'Does it help our kids?' It is amazing how Ms. Londa goes the extra mile for our kids and families. My favorite part about Mrs. Rochholz is her smile. She always has on a smile. She puts others before herself, no matter what your status is at school. Ms. Londa lets everyone know they're special."

Leila Schuck, *Administrator, Student Services Department*

"Leila is the epitome of a great leader. She puts herself out there, asks for input and never gives up on students. Her depth of knowledge, skill at communicating and ability to build relationships with teachers, students and families is unmatched. She has created an environment where our students with the greatest needs feel welcome, loved and valued. Leila leads by example and every staff member is a better educator for having worked with her."

Peter Tromba, *Principal, Spencer Butte Middle School*

"Peter Tromba is one of the best administrators I have ever worked for. He is hard-working, open-minded, caring, knowledgeable, and sincere, just to name a few of his positive qualities. He leads by example, modeling positive relationships, authenticity and a willingness to continue to grow and learn. He is willing to push boundaries, make changes, work as a team player, learn from mistakes, and constantly supports his staff to be the best that they can be!"

Brian Watson, *Assistant Principal, Monroe Middle School*

"Mr. Watson is a steady and compassionate educator that is invested in the Monroe community. His six years as assistant principal at Monroe have resulted in lasting relationships with students, staff and families. Brian empowers staff members to pursue their passion and do what they do best. He provides them with a depth and breadth of knowledge so they can make an impact in the classroom and office. His heart and head knowledge intersect, radiating a positive light on the greater community."

Trevor White, *Custodial Supervisor, Facilities Department*

"Trying to navigate through COVID-19, Trevor became an advocate for every 4J employee and student, and our community by jumping ahead and scooping up every possible hand sanitizer, glove, mask and disinfecting wipe he could possibly get his hands on. Trevor White would be the first person to put the spotlight of congratulations on someone else. We believe this is his time to shine for all of his commitment to this district."

Classified Staff

Christi Asha, *Educational Assistant, South Eugene High School*

"Christi Asha is a wonderfully skilled educator. She gets to know her students as both learners and whole people and strives to meet their needs even when the student doesn't know what they need at the time. She serves everyone with laughter on her lips and a listening ear. During a typical year, she is an amazing worker, but during the pandemic she has been a light to students and has tirelessly worked for her community and school."

Shannon Baimbridge, *Department Secretary, North Eugene High School*

"Shannon works above and beyond every day to assist parents in obtaining answers about remote learning and technology. With our new challenging situation, she is a cheerful, committed voice who obviously cares deeply about helping our children transition to a classroom-at-home learning environment. She is a calm voice in the storm. As a concerned parent, I immensely appreciate her dedication."

Peggy Blair, *Educational Assistant, Monroe Middle School*

"Peggy Blair has served as our campus supervisor for most of her 30 years at Monroe Middle School, while also teaching students reading through a program she co-taught. In her time at Monroe, she has helped bring hundreds of students up to grade level in reading, all while managing students sent out of class for behavior. Peggy has worked with some of the most difficult students in the school and built lasting relationships with many."

Jill Carpenter, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Jill works with many small groups of different aged students at our school. She has helped so many students overcome their reading and math fears. Jill encourages each student every day. They all know that SHE is in their corner! During distance learning, Jill has passed out iPads, lunches and student belongings. Jill has such a heart for our Awbrey Park students, and she is loved by all. The kids and staff are better for having Jill in their lives."

Maja Caya, *Food Service Coordinator II, South Eugene High School*

"Maja is amazing, and South Eugene is very lucky to have her running the kitchen. These are not normal times, and she goes above and beyond to make sure all who need food receive food. She gets there early and stays as long as needed to make sure there is enough food, then clean up and prepare for the next day. She doesn't expect or want thanks. She is the best."

Kaissi Collins, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Kaissi is a highly valued and dynamic member of the Spring Creek Life Skills team. Every day Kaissi brings a positive attitude and gives everything 110%. She is a leader in the classroom for both students and staff. She invests her heart into her job each day, and her passion for making a difference in students' lives is very apparent. Kaissi is one of the hardest working people around and truly enhances the lives of all of those around her."

Sara Cutler, *Educational Assistant, Gilham Elementary School*

"Sara is always the biggest advocate for my daughter. I feel like I can go to her with any issues or concerns, and she's always there to help and reassure me. Mrs. Cutler makes an effort to make things fun for my daughter every day. I'm not sure I would have made it through this year without her. She cares about her kids, first and foremost. She cares about their feelings, their safety and their overall school experience. She's amazing."

David Dotson, *Custodial Maintenance Coordinator II, 4J Education Center*

"Dave has an incredible work ethic. He responds quickly to any type of need, is so resourceful and helpful with troubleshooting, and does it all with a pleasant attitude and a smile. He not only responds to needs, but he also anticipates them and helps solve issues before they get bigger. 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."

Valerie Falleur, *Secretary, ECCO*

"Have you ever met someone who can handle it all? Who can multi-task like nobody's business? Who can find any answer and help you at the drop of hat while helping two or three other people with a smile? Yes, this is Valerie Falleur. Valerie has several nicknames at ECCO High School, for example, Lifesaver or Ring Leader or Puppet Master! She is a pure joy and pleasure to work alongside, and she takes on any task with flare, kindness and support."

Laurie Freeman, *Elementary School Office Assistant, McCornack Elementary School*

"Laurie is the upbeat, positive face that every person sees or hears when they come to McCornack. An epic multi-tasker, she has an incredible amount of knowledge and positive energy, and when she's not here, everyone notices. She's always looking for ways to improve, update or make changes that would benefit everyone. She encourages students to learn, and she does her best to enhance the quality of each student's experience. This school wouldn't run the same without her."

Lynne Given, *Secretary, Eugene International High School*

"Lynne fills every role needed, when needed and without complaint, all in the humble service of IHS students and teachers. Lynne is a caring listener and will always give an ear and a helpful nudge to an upset student or teacher. We all know that teaching is hard. What's mentioned less is that new teachers wouldn't last a week without the fierce support of people like Lynne."

Tory Guenther, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Sheldon High School*

"Tory is a tireless advocate and an emotional support to students. She will leave no stone unturned to find resources for students. This last winter, she petitioned teachers for their \$100 grant through OEA to go shopping for MANY students. Tory would submit all the paperwork and do the shopping for students. She works well with our learning center students, and they see her as a supportive mother figure."

Rebecca Hanson, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Howard Elementary School*

Rebecca is a one-of-a-kind teacher. I have never met anyone that gives so freely of their time to help not only our students but their families as well. She holds space for kids during their hardest moments, but also holds them to high expectations. She is innovative in her approaches to working with kids that are affected by their disabilities and/or traumas. Her ability to meet kids at their varying academic and emotional levels is astounding."

Diana Jurasevich, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Transition Education Network*

"Diana is a committed, supportive and caring team member at TEN's Community Living Program. She meets the students at their learning level and then asks them to reach a little higher. Without hesitation, she provides tools and support that build their confidence so the students can be successful. When things don't go as planned, Diana is reassuring, encouraging and helps students make a plan for success the next time. Staff and students alike appreciate Diana's calm, kind-hearted and easily approachable personality!"

Sheryl Kelly, *Educational Assistant, Corridor Elementary School*

"Sheryl is one of those people who feels like an anchor in the Corridor community. Sheryl takes the time to make us feel welcome when we arrive at school. She is in the background of every major event for the school. And with every greeting, we feel genuinely cared about. While we also love our Corridor teachers, Sheryl is the 'stuff in between' the connections my kids have with the teachers. She's the important connection that comes between class, activities and school years."

Heather Kendrick, *Secretary, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Heather is very supportive of our school and community by providing all who enter the building a positive comment and friendly smile. She always delays working on her reports to assist students in need or any staff member who might need her support. She embodies our school motto. She is kind, has a great sense of humor and treats everyone she greets with a smile and kind message."

Shelby Lindley, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Edison Elementary School*

"Shelby has worked for many years with students who have behavioral issues, learning disabilities and many different kinds of special needs. It does not matter what the issue is for the student. She shows up and cares about how they do at school. She has made the difference in many students' lives to help them feel successful. I am grateful to know her and work with her."

Phuong Pham-Morgan, *Educational Assistant, Family School*

"Phuong is one of the most selfless employees. She is always willing to stop what she is doing to help out a student or teacher. She has the patience of 10 people. She has a passion for learning and is always willing to share ideas. She is hard-working, creative and gives 100% energy each day. She always has a smile on her face and a positive comment for each student. Phuong is a gift to our school."

Kristan MacKay, *Front Office Assistant, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Kristan MacKay truly embodies a multi-tasking superstar. She can be on the phone, helping a sick child and answering a parent or teacher's question all at the same time, while maintaining her fantastic sense of humor and fun personality. Kristan will do whatever it takes to make sure the students have what they need, which includes bringing supplies for those who don't have any or enough. Kristan is also a wonderful colleague who is always supportive and a team player."

Jeanne Mandrapa, *Bilingual Educational Assistant,
Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion Elementary School*

"Jeanne is the center of our YG school day. She supervises breakfast and recess, assists with small group instruction in Japanese and participates in after-school homework club and Japanese Camp in the summer. Jeanne greets everyone with a smile and an offer to help. She is the one staff member who provides support to all grade levels, and her efforts contribute enormously to the extra cultural events that YG organizes."

Laura Naraguma Muco, *Behavioral Support Assistant,
Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

"Laura Naraguma Muco is a once-in-a-lifetime kind of employee. She possesses an incredible warmth of personality; students feel safe and comfortable with her. She holds a vision for what school can be for students; Laura never shies away from important and difficult conversations. Laura is talented beyond her years and current assignment, and what she brings to our school in her role is unparalleled."

Jincy Roberson, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Jincy is an amazing educator who brings kindness and enthusiasm to everything she does. She loves working with students and is masterful at actively engaging them in learning activities. Jincy advocates for students who receive deaf and hard of hearing services. She supports students and staff in connecting with each other and promotes a vision of inclusiveness for all. Recently, she created online resources for distance learning for students who are deaf or hard of hearing to ensure they can access instruction."

Jeremy Rutledge, *Custodial Maintenance Coordinator I, Awbrey Park
Elementary School*

"Jeremy Rutledge is a huge asset to Awbrey Park. He is always there to lend a hand and has been working so hard at sanitizing the school during the COVID-19 crisis, helping gather students' belongings and doing everything he can to keep teachers, students and staff as safe as he possibly can. Nothing seems to rile him. Mr. Jeremy, as the kids call him, is one of the most helpful and kind people I have had the joy to work with."

Mollie Smith, *Department Secretary, Monroe Middle School*

"Mollie is vital to the success of our office. She is typically the first person people see when they come into the office. She is welcoming, encouraging and enhances the quality of our students' experiences. She encourages student learning through interacting, helping in the library and coordinating yearbook efforts. Mollie is relational, caring, supportive and collaborative. Working with students, staff or families, she is always customer oriented!"

Burgandee Torres Mann, Attendance Clerk, Arts & Technology Academy

“Burgandee is a straight-up treasure. She completely, calmly, and competently addresses the needs of our varied and differently-abled students. Burgandee deserves at the very least a ticker-tape parade with a convertible and several floats dedicated in her honor. She manages to complete an ever-lengthening list of job duties with a smile on her face, and she enriches students’ and staff members’ lives with her humor, grace and positive attitude.”

Juan Villeda, Custodial Maintenance Coordinator I, Gilham Elementary School

“As lead custodian at Gilham Elementary, Juan Villeda brings a quiet strength to education. He is always the first person to offer to help, the first to arrive and not uncommonly the last to go home. In just a few short years, Juan has developed the expertise to begin mentoring other new colleagues as they enter the district. He really goes above and beyond in everything that he does. We are so lucky to have him.”

Judy Weber, Educational Assistant, Edgewood Elementary School

“Judy is the hardest working, selfless, supportive and compassionate person I have ever had the pleasure to work with. As a kindergarten EA, Judy is on the frontline with our youngest learners. She helps with tears, bathroom accidents, bumps and scrapes with encouragement and celebration. She is a selfless human being worthy of recognition for all that she contributes to the lives of students and staff every single day. She is an incredible person.”

Anna Wellman, Registrar, Monroe Middle School

“As a point person in the front office, Anna is often the first line of defense for students who come into the office for breaks, who are upset or that need support. Anna is often found working with students as they wait for the counselor or supporting students to return to the classroom. Anna is an outstanding registrar, educator and point person for our front office. She is essential to our school climate and culture.”

Alex Zuniga, Office Support–Bilingual/Bicultural, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School

“Alex is there for the kids every day in the front office with kindness and witty humor that the kids love. He brings joy to what could otherwise be upsetting moments for kids, such as being late to school or feeling sick or needing assistance. Alex has a wonderful rapport with kids and parents! His kindness, intelligence, humor and proficiency are rare. He is one of a kind.”

Volunteers

Allen Amaro, *Twin Oaks Elementary School*

"Allen cares about all our Twin Oaks students. He's often stayed through lunch to finish grading or to connect with me about a student. In my 27 years of teaching, I have never had a classroom volunteer with such a huge heart for all students. Allen is a grandfather to 90 Twin Oaks kids at a time. When our students look back at their time at Twin Oaks, they will remember Allen as a big part of their math learning."

Bruce Campbell, *Howard Elementary School*

Bruce "The Gardener" Campbell is our volunteer extraordinaire. He has transformed Howard Elementary's green spaces with his time and energy. Our school has been restored to beauty because of his kindness and dedication. He has a light that shines bright for loving others. His dedication to the school leads many to believe he was a 4J employee. Because of him we have beautiful places where kids can walk, play, create and learn."

Shelly Carlton, *Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Shelly not only supports the class she volunteers in, but she supports all of Spring Creek in any way she can. She is a team player through and through. There is nothing Shelly isn't willing to do: leading art activities, making copies or hanging up and taking down decorations. Shelly is kind, gentle, patient and always uplifts those around her. Her ability to encourage people and help them see the good is immeasurable."

Jill Cole, *Holt Elementary School*

"Jill is a celebrity at Holt Elementary School, as well as at Monroe Middle School. She can't walk down the hallway without being noticed, hugged or waved to. Her school spirit is off the charts! She is always willing to help bring the fun to school. Whether it's helping with a school assembly, running the school book fair, celebrating teachers and staff, or other fun shenanigans. She's the best!"

April Colgrove, *Monroe Middle School*

"April is a pillar of our parent community. She is actively involved in our parent organization where she is vital to our fundraising efforts. The funds go directly to support students' needs and school programs. She enhances the quality of the student experience through the activities she helps organize. Her involvement in various ways cannot be understated. She is present, willing, able, collaborative, caring and compassionate. We need more Aprils!"

Elizabeth Custer, Spring Creek Elementary School

"Elizabeth is the epitome of what it means to be a 4J volunteer. She helps the whole school however she can, often without even being asked. Elizabeth volunteers two or three times A DAY in two different classes. When working with students, Elizabeth is patient, gentle and funny. She makes sure students know what's expected of them, and she's quick to redirect in a positive way. She is a dedicated team player who fills so many gaps."

Mark Davenport, River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School

"Mr. Mark's upbeat demeanor, excellent character and motivational skills have inspired kids to keep going and to stay in the game, regardless if the outcome does not go in their favor. He has an amazing calming effect and convincing power to keep students engaged in whatever the class is actively doing. Mark is an exceptional person, loving dad and caring partner. He serves unconditionally as another caring adult in the lives of many who could use some extra love and attention."

Leah Detzler, Monroe Middle School

"Our staff refrigerator went out at the beginning of the year, and we were searching for people to help find a replacement. Leah stepped up and found one and had her husband deliver it later that week. Leah understands the need to support the greater community. Her willingness to serve in any capacity has had such a positive impact on our school and community. Not only is she great at coming up with ideas, she follows through!"

Ashlee Dixon, Gilham Elementary School

"Ashlee Dixon is a champion in education because she inspires students to reach their full potential. In addition to being an amazing mother to twin boys and working full-time, she spends countless hours sharing her talents and enthusiasm with the Gilham community as a leader on our PTO. She brings people together to accomplish great things through transparent communication, unbridled optimism and a love of kids!"

Jessica Fujimoto, Spring Creek Elementary School

"Jessica is always willing to help. She will come in to the classroom and ask to help sharpen pencils, file and organize. She is great at running small groups and is super reliable. Jessica comes into both her kindergarten and third grade students' classrooms twice a week, and she's always willing to come in more often if asked. Jessica is always willing to work one-on-one with all students to help them get caught up or to finish a difficult task."

Chelsea Hardrath, *Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion Elementary School*

"Chelsea has served as the PTO treasurer for four years. She has continually raised the bar and expectations for how to serve our YG community through parent participation and engagement. She is thoughtful and measured in her role as a parent leader in our community. She is someone who shows concerns about safety and fiscal responsibility. Chelsea is always thinking about the kids, what would be fun for them and how we can add it to an event."

Diane Lane, *Edison Elementary School*

"Diane Lane has volunteered in my elementary classroom every week for the last 10 years and is an integral part of it. She has given generously of her money, time and love for the students. Diane jumps willingly into whatever project(s) I have set out for her that week. She always comes into the classroom with a smile, and she has a special knack for finding the child most in need of her attention that day."

Alice Lin, *McCornack Elementary School*

"Alice Lin is a volunteer who has been a huge help and a kid's favorite at McCornack and other schools that I have worked in during the past decade. She's a true saint and blessing to every child she sees every time she walks in the building. She volunteers so much time and is so kind, thoughtful and compassionate to EVERYONE. She's hands down the best friend to all 4J schools I have ever witnessed."

Maggie McCart, *Edison Elementary School*

"To say that Maggie is an outstanding volunteer does not fully capture the contribution she makes to Edison every year. She brings smiles to the faces of both staff and students when she gives her time. Maggie's leadership and dedication to her work inspire so many others. She is a role model at embracing the diverse student body and the needs for an outstanding education for all. Maggie has that magic that makes learning fun even when it might not be easy."

Tom Mohr, *Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion Elementary School*

"Tom is the school crossing guard, but he is so much more. He greets every student every day with a high five, fist bump, or a friendly wave and a kind word. He can often be found on weekends shagging balls at soccer games or walking the track at North Eugene High School. Tom is so much more than someone who fills a gap or waits to be told what to do. Instead, he takes the lead in connecting with students, families and staff in a genuine manner that clearly shows he loves to support others."

Tobey Ritchie, Monroe Middle School

"Tobey is always engaged when talking with students, staff and families. Her care for the community is evident through her steadfast commitment to serving others. She radiates joy and light as she supports the school and greater community. Her ability to articulate her thoughts in different settings inspires others. Whether it's working with the high school football staff, Monroe's parent group or community networks, she is an advocate for our students and community."

Annette Schwabl, Spring Creek Elementary School

"She not only volunteers daily, but she volunteers TWICE a day or sometimes more. She supports second grade as a whole, willing to do whatever is needed. Annette goes above and beyond to not only support her children and the classes she volunteers in but all of Spring Creek Elementary. Her ability to navigate student needs is admirable. Annette has a smile and positivity that is contagious. 4J is lucky to have a dedicated, flexible volunteer like her."

Nancy Shawver, Awbrey Park Elementary School

"Nancy has volunteered in her twin grandchildren's classrooms once a week. She has been doing this since her grandchildren started school so all the third graders know and love her at this point. She is incredibly patient and kind. She brings her 'magic pencil' and warm smile, and the kids can't wait until it's their turn to be in whatever group she is leading. She truly cares for the children and this is easy to see in the way she talks with and relates to them."

Jennifer Sheffler, Arts & Technology Academy

"While Jenn is a vital part of student and family social events, she also has reached out to many during this challenging school closure time. She has offered up gift cards to families in need and is making masks for custodians, community members and staff. Jenn reached out to a family and took care of providing them internet service so that their students could access online learning more quickly. Jenn has an amazingly big heart! She puts others first and truly cares."

Caroline Snider, Spring Creek Elementary School

"Even though Caroline was new to Eugene this school year, she was quick to volunteer and jump right into the classroom. She not only volunteers in my classroom daily, but she also serves as my PTO room parent, attends PTO meetings, helps with the library weekly, AND volunteers to help with school events. Caroline is reliable, patient and kind. She is a superstar and an asset to the whole school!"

Tina Tague, Holt Elementary School

"Tina is a volunteer coordinator and Holt cheerleader par excellence! Her incredible energy in support of Holt teachers, support staff, kids and families is like an amazing motor that never quits. She is always positive in her outlook and willing to do ANYTHING to help others at our school. Her efforts as volunteer coordinator for Holt's parent organization always exceed expectations. Tina is just a joy and a treasure and is so, so appreciated!"

Teachers & Licensed Specialists

Cherie Aaron, Kindergarten Teacher, Gilham Elementary School

"She has a wonderful attitude towards all kids in class. She's highly professional and has great education methodology! My children have special needs and did everything possible (and impossible) to help them adjust to the school environment. The result was amazing. They improved a lot during this school year. It was a great experience, and our children feel at home in her classroom."

Mary Adams, Math Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy

"I see her put students and families first in every discussion. She was doing this consistently before the COVID pandemic, but she has stepped up her advocacy for families navigating distance learning. She organizes events that are inclusive of all students and benefits their families. Without her hard work our Holiday Market couldn't have happened. Our school benefits greatly from Mary's hard work and advocacy."

Holly Albone, Visual Art Teacher, Kennedy Middle School & Churchill High School

"Ms. Albone is always there when we need help or are confused on something, and she always helps us to understand. She deserves an award because she is super kind and caring. She is kind because she cares and she cares because she is kind. By caring I mean she cares about our understanding of things. By kind I mean she answers our questions in a kindly manner."

Lisa Albrich, Spanish Teacher, Sheldon High School

"Lisa Albrich is by far one of the most dedicated and deserving teachers of our time. She is the reason I myself became an educator. She connects and engages her students in such an authentic way that not only does she form an immediate bond, she forms a bond that can last a lifetime. She is the educator we should all strive to be. Her grace and intelligence is unparalleled in her field."

Nancy Anderson, *Choir Teacher, Sheldon High School*

"I am fortunate to have known Nancy Anderson as both a teacher and a colleague. When I was a student, Nancy provided a safe place to express emotion and connect through music. She has planned countless extra opportunities to show her students the world. As a colleague, I've seen Nancy give countless hours advocating for the diverse needs of our students. She meets students where they're at and provides chances for each student to grow in their own way."

Rachelle Ariola, *Fourth/Fifth Grade Teacher, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"The patience, knowledge, passion and dedication that Mrs. Ariola brings to her school, her staff and her classroom is incredible. Rachelle is always first in line to be on a committee, to help generate ideas and to make our community the best it can be. Her determination to bring out the best in every student is a natural gift that she has blessed us all with. Thank you for being you and please don't ever stop being amazing!"

Cait Balthrop, *Special Education Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Cait is simply the real deal, a true professional who cares for all students. She constantly goes above and beyond to support the social, emotional and academic success of her students. She improvises, adapts and overcomes any and all social anxiety issues that may arise. Cait is knowledgeable about her students' family situations and all of their specific needs, issues and supports. She is an amazing co-worker, always ready to help and support all of the kids at our school."

Jennifer Bender, *Science Teacher, Churchill High School*

"Bender is one of the most energetic and passionate teachers I had in my time at Churchill. She was consistently excited about the subjects I had with her (Biology A and Biology B) and made it very easy to understand; hers were the most memorable classes I ever had. Bender was always open to whatever questions her students had and created a very safe and open learning environment."

Stephanie Birmingham, *Language Arts Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Ms. Birmingham is a wonderful teacher who goes above and beyond for her students. She has made such a difference for my student during this crazy distance learning time by making her feel connected, cared about and still part of the school community. She is such a gem, and my daughter is so lucky to have had her for a teacher."

Tim Bjornstad, *Language Arts Teacher, ECCO*

"Tim Bjornstad is an educator and leader that changes lives. Possessing great smarts and a fantastic sense of humor, Tim is the kind of human that belongs in education. He thrives off knowledge, people and supplying excellent, caring leadership. He values truth, compassion and students, and he passes this vitality and spirit to anyone who crosses his path. He has the biggest classes at ECCO, and you will walk past them hearing voices of laughter and joy."

Carissa Boyce, *Title 1 Coordinator, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Carissa Boyce is a dedicated teacher and leader at Awbrey Park. She finds fun, engaging ways to teach reading and shares these ways with the whole staff. She is available with advice on engaging lessons and is committed to equity. She plans many school events, such as STEM and Literacy Nights, and even a drive-through parade to bring some cheer to our Awbrey Park community during quarantine."

Brenda Brainard, *Director, NATIVES Program*

"Her commitment and love for all students is at the forefront. In the midst of COVID-19, she delivers 300 lunches and food boxes daily, making sure to touch base with students to see if their needs are being met. Brenda's encouragement and guidance in getting students and volunteers involved in the totems has enriched our community in Native culture, as well as her work in getting much needed curriculum for schools to teach about Oregon's Native Americans."

Kristina Brooks, *Language Arts Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy*

"She's helping me a lot with my student. She suggested to change schedules for him, and it is working better. She's an excellent teacher always working so hard to try to help the kids and parents, too."

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

"Ms. Carnagey is a quiet leader. She brings a calming, bright presence into the lives of her first grade students—and their families. Ms. Carnagey's devotion to her students is palpable. So too is her humanity. By meeting them where they are, Meg makes her students feel seen and cared for. At a time when our children need stabilizing inspiration the most, Ms. Carnagey, thankfully, is there. The Adams community is so lucky to have Meg!"

Sebastian Catlin, *Student Achievement Specialist, South Eugene High School*

"From giving students a safe space at lunch if they're having trouble with social things to spending chunks of class working with them on homework, Mr. Catlin is wholly dedicated to making the lives of his students better. He purchases school supplies for kids who don't have their own, and he helps them use the resources provided by South Eugene High School. He advocates for students in their classes and encourages them to try their hardest and believe in themselves."

Charissa Charpie, *Third Grade Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Charissa is creative and makes learning fun for kids. She is always coming up with ideas to teach kids through art, while blessing the rest of us with her imaginative and colorful ideas throughout the school. Her energy is non-stop while her smile and laughter fill our halls and bring joy instantly to others. She is an amazing teacher and Howard Elementary is so lucky to have gained such a strong teacher."

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

"Lisa is a truly dedicated educator who works each day to make sure each child who comes to her gym feels valued and appreciated no matter what their level of fitness is. She plans creative activities that allow children of all levels of coordination and ability to have success and a good time. She loves her job and her students. She takes pride in providing activities that the kids love while improving their fitness."

Amanda Christie, *Third Grade Teacher, Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion Elementary School*

"Amanda is the perfect person to help kids gently transition from the early grades of elementary school to the later grades. She teaches empathy and kindness through her actions and encourages students to consider how their actions are influencing the community. She is always willing to lend a listening ear and provide level-headed advice. Amanda supports all students and makes learning fun and engaging for everyone."

Justine Chunn, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Mrs. Chunn continually demonstrates going above and beyond for her students. She has a strong bond with her students and they want to learn because of that. Now that online home school is up and running, she keeps the kids engaged and continually cared for. On the Zoom meetings, she invites other staff from the school as a "mystery person" who the students try to guess by a list of cool fun facts that kids wouldn't know about."

Jacob Clark, *Spanish/Social Studies Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"With the coronavirus pandemic, Jacob's unassuming manner has been incredibly helpful as we transition to a new kind of normal. He has been offering his expertise to colleagues who need support. He's also reminding us of the tremendous potential that we have to support students all while elevating our teaching. He has risen to every challenge that our current situation has thrown at us, and continues to lead and empower our educational community with a calm sense of clarity and purpose."

Linda Coombs, *Speech–Language Pathologist*

Edison & Charlemagne French Immersion elementary schools

"Linda is compassionate, caring and kind towards teachers, parents, instructional assistants and administration. She has high expectations for herself and her students. She always goes out of her way to show students that she cares. She is exceptional in her interactions with students and staff. She is a treasure to our school!"

Jessy Corliss, *First Grade Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Jessy goes above and beyond for her students and answers parents' questions. She has great teaching techniques that make it fun for her students. She puts their needs first and if a student has a problem, she helps them work through it. She cares about her students' health in all aspects, including mental and emotional. She is engaged with her kids and wants what is best for them."

Patrice Cowman, *First Grade Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Mrs. Cowman shows such love and patience with her kiddos. She teaches with enthusiasm, kindness and humor! She encourages her children to be great! She is the teacher every parent wants to teach their child. She taught my first granddaughter and was amazing then and continues to be!"

Kim DeLeon, *Special Education Teacher, McCornack Elementary School*

"Kim DeLeon is a dedicated, professional, innovative and loving version of an Educator Energizer Bunny—tirelessly pursuing what's best for students and their families. Kim came to the 4J district as a special education teacher after building a love for students with behavioral and emotional challenges while working as an educational assistant. She jumped into her position at full speed and hasn't slowed an iota in more than two years."

Karen Doerfert, *Music Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Karen Doerfert is an inspiring and hard-working music educator who has devoted unstinting efforts to developing music programs at Roosevelt Middle School. When RMS shifted to a schedule with alternate days for electives, she rose to the occasion and developed many new courses. She inspires and encourages students at all levels of musical experience through creative programming and activities."

Megan Dougherty, *First Grade Teacher, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Megan is always finding creative ways to engage students in learning. She has reached out to many first-grade teachers in the Eugene and Springfield area through Google Docs and Facebook. Through these resources, Megan has created a classroom that guides her students to succeed, especially in the reading and math domains. She is an excellent communicator for students, families and staff alike. She makes them all feel welcome and special at the same time."

Dene Eller, *Physical Education Teacher, River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School*

"It's easy to see why students, parents and teachers love Dr. Dene! From the moment you meet her, you are impressed by her positive energy, enthusiasm and attitude! She works hard every day, giving 110% to her students to not only teach, but to encourage, support and help them believe in themselves as well as their abilities. Her teaching style goes beyond the gym. She sincerely wants students to do well in school and in their lives."

Jason Erickson, *Social Studies/AVID Teacher, Madison Middle School*

"Like Atlas bearing the world on his shoulders, so Jason Erickson stands to lift his students up with love, support and compassion! He teaches with a joy and excitement that invigorates his kids and inspires them on to greatness so much so that even Chuck Norris would bow in humble admiration for the time and energy he puts into his students' success. He sees kids for what they can become and encourages them to believe in themselves."

Jack Fertal, *Math Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Jack has an amazing system that he has shown us and that is very clear and understandable. It has helped me organize, study and succeed in geometry. I am very sad to know that Jack will be leaving Roosevelt at the end of this year because he is somebody who has always been able to help me there. He is funny, smart and, most importantly, serious about what he teaches us."

Sara Fisher, *Physical Education Teacher, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Maestra Fisher goes above and beyond her role of PE teacher by leading Jogging Jags (a running program that encourages kids to come to school early and jog), teaching the kids dances that make moving fun, and coordinating other events like the Duck Dash, Heart Association fundraisers and relay races at school. These things have taught the students valuable lessons on goal setting, pacing, graceful winning and losing, the celebration of others, and what it means to be strong and healthy."

Fenn Guill, *Second Grade Teacher, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"I feel inexplicably lucky to be Fenn's teaching partner. She has been a lifeline, meeting whenever I need, helping me plan and encouraging me to rest and refocus. Fenn is always thinking of others and how she can better support her students and Spring Creek. She is quick to help those who need it, offering a grounded, realistic perspective. Fenn lifts up those around her to her amazing level of teaching, planning and patience. She's a role model for all."

Helen Haberman, *Social Studies Teacher, Churchill High School*

"For over 20 years, Helen Haberman has demonstrated inspiring leadership to our community of students, staff and the city of Eugene. She started the Rachel Carson Academy 20 years ago with Tim Whitle, and the program under her leadership has weathered every storm, as the face of education has changed over the years. She has inspired nearly a generation of students in 4J to become stewards of the environment and global citizens."

Nicholas Hadley, *Spanish Immersion Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"Mr. Hadley is a phenomenal teacher who is beloved by his students, colleagues and families. He has such an amazing skill set, able to teach ELA/Social Studies content in SPANISH! He is able to integrate instructional strategies and culture into his classroom each and every day. Instead of a 'sit and get' style, his students are always engaged in project-based learning. He is caring, supportive, collaborative, innovative and willing."

Aimee Harrington, *Language Arts/Social Studies Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy*

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, Aimee has gone out of her way to ask students what books they have for choice reading. When any of them inform her that they don't have a book to read, she finds out what they want, orders it or finds it in her own library and then personally delivers it to the student's doorstep. This act of love, for both reading and for her students, enlarges my heart during this difficult time."

Jessica Harvey, *School Psychologist, Gilham Elementary School*

"Ms. Harvey is a stand-out team player. She has the depth of knowledge and the breadth of experience to handle all aspects of her job, from helping families navigate the world of special education to teaching social skills to wiggly five-year-olds during her off-time. She partners with teachers and teams to help kids see the potential in themselves and develop strategies for success to last a lifetime!"

Jacob Havner, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Adams Elementary School*

"Mr. Havner models and encourages positive emotional wellness by both explaining his needs and showing self-care. He supports students and families by asking for the tools they need to feel comfortable and cultivate a growth mindset. He makes every effort to meet each student he encounters where they are coming from. He commits to open communication and demonstrates compassion and support for the students in his care. Every interaction he has with his students is genuine and focused."

Debbi Heinrich, *Fifth Grade Teacher, Holt Elementary School*

"Debbi is not only a highly effective teacher, but she is also a standout teacher-leader in a building with many effective teacher-leaders. Debbi is an excellent advocate who consistently demonstrates professionalism, support for colleagues and superb communication with all stakeholders. Her equity-driven approach to problem solving is bolstered by her trust, compassion and organization. Respect and appreciation for Debbi is universal."

Peter Hoffmeister, *Language Arts/PE Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Peter Hoffmeister is a teacher who truly cares for each and every student. He tries his best to make school an enjoyable place by having us do work where we actually learn and get useful skills instead of doing loads of tests. I think he is one of the best teachers I have had because he somehow made it so I get excited for school. I think any teacher that can get a student to enjoy something they hate through their actions deserves something."

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

"Christie cares unconditionally for all students and creates an exciting environment for her class to explore and grow in. She is kind, caring and supports all students so that they thrive in her class. She is wonderful!"

Corey Hoogendoorn, *Special Education Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Corey provides a safe and comfortable environment for students to learn and staff to approach him. When I was a first-year teacher, Corey gave me the confidence to become a master teacher. There were many times when I wouldn't know what to do, and I would seek his advice. Instead of being frustrated with taking on my responsibilities, he reassured me with his calm demeanor that I was doing the right thing and constantly had advice."

Anne Hubbard, *Kindergarten Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Anne is the most caring, influential teacher I've ever met. Observing her in the classroom was shocking. I loved the way she helped her youngsters and guided them. She is so very positive and upbeat. Anne is a positive and uplifting educator who loves deeply."

Krissy Hulse, *Fourth/Fifth Grade Teacher, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Mrs. Hulse has simply been such an amazing teacher and support for both my children. They absolutely love her and the way she supports and helps them. During this virus outbreak, she has been amazing at keeping in contact and updating us all as much as possible. She is simply an amazing teacher who goes above and beyond to help our children achieve."

Jacque Ivankovic, *Special Education Teacher, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Jacque is the most hard-working, knowledgeable and organized Life Skills teacher I have had the pleasure to work with. Her energy and dedication to the job makes our team want to work harder every day. Jacque is only in her second year of teaching, but she carries herself like she's been doing it her whole life. Her support has allowed our team to become better able to serve our students, and our students have grown tremendously."

Sara Jenson, *Math Teacher, Spencer Butte Middle School*

"Sara Jenson encouraged me to try and taught me that it was okay to make mistakes. I finally got to the point where I wanted to ask questions and learn instead of just trying to get through the two hours of math I had with her. She talks to me like a person and not someone above me. I feel like she is my friend and my teacher. I feel like I can talk to her about anything."

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

"When I sat down with Mrs. Justice at parent-teacher conferences this year, it hit me that it would be the last time. I unexpectedly teared up. She has provided a first-grade experience for all my children that I am so grateful for. I was sad that my last son would not get to finish the year in her physical classroom, but Mrs. Justice has created an online learning environment for him that still embodies all the amazing qualities of her physical classroom."

Peggy Karotko, *Language Arts/Social Studies Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"Mrs. Karotko lives for education. She is an outstanding teacher, colleague, and mentor for others. Many new teachers have shared just how amazing Peggy was in helping them get their start. As a teacher, she prides herself on being firm, but loving, and feels that with enough time, she can win any student over—and she has, year after year. She has gone above and beyond as a professional educator to make a lasting difference in the lives of students and positive impact on others that will not be forgotten."

Jana Kincaid, *Fourth Grade Teacher,*

Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School

"As a French teacher, she's innovative in creating fun ways for students to learn the language with vibrant lessons that spark interest and a passion for learning. She is humble and admits when she makes a mistake with students or colleagues. She's constantly fighting for what's best for her students. To teach at such caliber is one thing, but to teach this pedagogy in a second language is a beautiful feat she accomplishes daily."

Allison Kreider, *Third Grade Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Mrs. Kreider is an exceptional teacher who advocates fiercely for her students and guides them to become enthusiastic learners. She has clear—and high—expectations for her students, giving them the tools and paths to meet those expectations. Mrs. Kreider encourages her students to develop empathy and kindness, as well as awareness of the world around them. Most of all, Mrs. Kreider 'makes learning fun,' according to my son. After trying to teach him at home for two weeks, I have come to realize this is no small feat."

Claire Kronser, *Art Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"Claire is truly the heART of Monroe Middle School—both for kids and staff. Her art, her positive leadership on staff and her caring have created an atmosphere of warm inclusion. She makes even unwilling kids discover and inspire their own inner artists—then she created Art (and Music) in the Courtyard to show off their talent. If it's fun and well-organized, or deeply caring about kids or staff, Claire is probably behind it. Art or heart, Claire is there."

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

"Joel Kuiper exemplifies what it means to nurture a student's growth, self-awareness and independence. He demonstrates daily that what we do, what we say and what we believe impacts how students with disabilities see themselves in their community, the world and in their future. He is the unsung hero who each day takes the time to understand his students, engage with them where they are along their developmental journey, and respect the strides they make no matter how small they may be."

Aaron Kurlychek, *Math Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy*

"I have been thoroughly impressed with Mr. Kurlychek all year in helping my daughter be successful in middle school. But what's he's done since the pandemic has simply blown me away. Mr. Kurlychek has become a HERO for the 'new norm' of remote learning. While this has been a difficult transition for teachers and students alike, Mr. Kurlychek has embraced it and made it a successful learning environment."

Brian Kuzma, *Head Teacher, Eugene International High School*

"While Brian is an excellent teacher, as supported by the number of students who connect with him after they graduate, what most impresses me is his ability to pivot smoothly from one hat to another. It is not uncommon to see him explaining supply and demand or negative externalities while running copies between classes and checking in with the secretary for any updates at that specific campus. Brian manages to keep the needs of all students at the forefront, not matter whether that is in teaching, leading our staff or caring for his own children. He has made us a better staff for his efforts."

Sarah Lacey, *Title I Teacher/Instructional Coach, Edison Elementary School*

"Sarah works hard to instill excitement and a love for learning with all students. She is a patient and persistent teacher, and her students know how much she expects of them and how fiercely she believes in them. Sarah checks in with kids in her program (as well as others she has connected with) throughout the day, offering supports when she knows they are having a hard time. Every kid feels seen and loved by her."

Linda Lamb, *Special Education Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"As a special ed mom, I've met every kind of teacher. I've visited every school and evaluated every program. Linda was one of the first people I spoke with about my son's needs. From day one, she cared. Really cared. She went above and beyond to make sure that he was comfortable. I've never met a teacher who cared more about my son's education and development."

Ron Lampe, *Physical Education Teacher, Sheldon High School*

"By far one of the most encouraging and nicest teachers I have ever had throughout my high school career. He cares for all his students and takes time out of his day to make them feel welcomed. He also pushes his students to do bigger and better things. Not only that, but he always has the best attitude around and always has a smile on his face."

Rebecca Leduc, Kindergarten Teacher, Edgewood Community Elementary School

"She lives for her students, school, parents and fellow educators. She is truly passionate and giving beyond belief. Her constant communication and concern for my child's well-being during this health pandemic has highlighted how amazing she is in the classroom. She's caring, concerned, loyal and truly committed to all students."

Michael Lewis, Special Education Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy

"Mr. Lewis has always encouraged my son to learn by engaging in his interests, being supportive and pushing him to his limits. He has provided my son with the necessary tools to be successful in school and life. Mr. Lewis has all the qualities it takes to be an exceptional teacher. He has demonstrated, not only with words, but also with actions, how much he truly cares about his students."

Debra Lydum, Special Education Teacher, Kelly Middle School

"Debra Lydum is an amazing teacher who is a true advocate. During the COVID-19 online school time, Ms. Lydum has gone out of her way to email, phone call, Zoom and make sure that my daughter still feels connected to her school. She also has always been readily available to us as parents whenever we needed to communicate. Ms. Lydum has made a tremendous impact on her life. She is a true gem."

Joy Maxwell, School Nurse, Student Services Department

"Joy Maxwell is truly the heart and backbone of 4J's health services. Her commitment to our students, our families and our staff is unparalleled. She represents the very best in school nursing! She is the one we call when we need an empathetic ear, a pep talk, a professional opinion or a friend. Students seek out her support and care. She is a leader both in our district and in our community."

Sarah McKrola, Kindergarten Teacher, Edison Elementary School

"To help with a new normal during the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Sarah quickly established a class Facebook page to connect with her students. However, she is also aware of some students' lack of internet and technology support and has started a new tradition, 'Walking Wednesdays.' On Wednesdays, she will walk by your home and connect with the students from the appropriate distance. She gives them a familiar face and something to look forward to during this period."

Matthew Monson, *Third Grade Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

“Mr. Monson is one of the best teachers we have ever had the privilege of working with. He shows an extreme level of respect, professionalism and passion for teaching. Mr. Monson has a way of speaking to his students that makes them feel valued, holds them accountable and gets them excited to learn. Mr. Monson creates such a magical energy in his class you can literally feel it walking in every morning.”

Talon Nansel, *Music Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

“Talon goes above and beyond for the Monroe community, volunteering at every opportunity. He is an exceptional communicator and has taught my children to truly love music. He exemplifies what an educator is. He is tough, patient and kind. He always has a listening ear when a kid needs it and can wrangle hundreds of middle schoolers to work together!”

Karen Olsen, *Fifth Grade Teacher, McCornack Elementary School*

“Karen Olsen takes pride in her teaching. She gives the students what they need and helps them get to where they need to go. She is a phenomenal teacher and lets students be themselves. She uses amazing teaching strategies and gets everyone interested in the topic, as well as doing passion projects with the students on their interests. She gives an amazing reason to be present at school, whether online or in class.”

Ann Parks, *Special Education Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

“Ms. Parks shows compassion and patience, which at times is very difficult in a special education setting. She is continuously looking for ways to best serve her students, by understanding what works and doesn’t work for them and by listening to the students’ caregivers and teachers. As a teacher who wears her heart on her sleeve, Ms. Parks will always aim to make the lives of her students and their needs her first priority.”

Kim Pash-Bell, *Second Grade Teacher*

Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School

“Kim brings an inspired love of nature and science into the classroom with many lessons that include topics that take students far beyond the confines of the Common Core. This passion, coupled with her writing curriculum, allows students to dive deeply into topics that interest them while building the foundations of research and peer review into her lesson plans. Students leave her class with deep skills in creative and academic writing.”

Megan Perdue, *Music Teacher, North Eugene High School*

"Megan is a change leader, student advocate and overall effector of change. In four years at North Eugene High School, she has elevated a choir program that emphasized inclusion of all students ... I mean ALL students. Many students with significant learning disabilities and those who have been historically unsuccessful in school thrived in her music program. She has performed all of these duties with a great level of anonymity and humility while eager to give credit to others involved. She is the 'Real MVP.'"

Monica Pérez, *First Grade Teacher,
Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Monica Pérez is one of Buena Vista's incredible visiting teachers from Spain. Monica has approached her first year teaching here in Eugene with optimism and genuine care for all her students. She has created such a warm, pleasant classroom experience for these first graders. Maestra Pérez offers a rigorous academic experience while also caring for the whole child—their happiness and mental health. We are extremely fortunate to have her teaching at our school!"

Scott Pierce, *Counselor, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Scott is a force of nature with these kids. He sees potential in them and works hard to find it even when the child doesn't see it themselves. My son came into ATA with severe trust issues when it came to staff, and Scott worked hard to help him overcome those issues and begin to thrive. I appreciate Scott's hard work with my son. He is an amazing influence in students' lives."

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

"Ashley does an amazing job connecting to her students and their families at Howard, not only during class, but spending her time attending additional meetings, PTO functions, and other extracurricular activities. She also makes an impact with her involvement in the union and is a great advocate for all members of the educational community. Ashley is deserving of an award because she is an amazing teacher, but an even better advocate for her students and their families."

Venus Reeve, *Special Education Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Ms. Reeve is a teacher who will readily give her time for students, families and staff to support her school's vision of success to ensure that all students learn in a respectful, challenging and collaborative environment. She puts children and their families at the forefront of everything she does. She is full of laughter and love and is ready and willing to help students and families with whatever they need. Her smile and generosity are unmatched."

Jonathan Reveal, *Science Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

“Mr. Reveal quickly established himself as a team leader and instructional leader in our building within his first year. He is one of our technology leaders as well as a go-to person for ideas around instruction. Students strongly connect to Mr. Reveal and often come back to say hello and connect with him. He is an exemplary educator that goes above and beyond in every way he can to support his students, his staff and colleagues around the district.”

Elle Sabala, *Spanish Teacher, South Eugene High School*

“Sabala teaches us to love and learn a subject we may otherwise not enjoy, and truly makes us feel cared for, secure, and confident. She teaches in such a way that students are engaged in the class, and actually listen to what she has to say not just out of necessity. Sabala helps reaffirms students’ belief in themselves and their own ability to succeed. She engages with the students in an interactive way that makes us feel like she cares.”

Jessica Schabtach, *Language Arts Teacher, Eugene International High School*

“Jessica always gives students her all, whether it’s dressing up in costume to teach a novel, spending countless hours reading essays or working with students one-on-one to improve their writing. She possesses a rare combination of erudition, creativity and empathy that make her an outstanding teacher. She is not only a leader, but also an inspiration to the IHS school community who isn’t afraid to embrace silly activities that make learning fun. In short, she is amazing!”

Takako Schneider, *Kindergarten Teacher,
Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion Elementary School*

“Through music, art and Japanese, Takako has engaged children to begin a love for learning. Takako enables students to develop and retain skills to learn a second—and sometimes third—language, all while providing students with a warm and nurturing environment to learn in. To this day, my kiddo can still sing ‘atama, kata, hiza, ashi’ (head, shoulders, knees, toes) for which I am so grateful!”

Chelsea Schwartz, *Kindergarten Teacher, Spring Creek Elementary School*

“Chelsea is very professional and very enthusiastic about her job as a teacher. At a previous school, my son was having a hard time understanding a certain subject. After being in Chelsea’s classroom, my son has more than doubled his ability in that subject in the first half of the 2019–20 school year. Chelsea is a valuable asset to 4J with exceptional talent.”

Mike Seager, *Special Education Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Mike is always there when someone needs help from him. He has done a Zoom meeting every day during social distancing. He is super nice to all of his students. He has rainbow hair, juggles, and rides a unicycle. What more could a kid want?"

Virginia Seefeld, *Math Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Virginia makes learning FUN. She has incredible energy and enjoys laughing and smiling with her middle school students. Virginia is passionate about math and pushes her students to reach high standards. Whenever a student needs help or a parent has a question, Virginia is there. I appreciate how talented Virginia is at her job and how much time she invests in her students, in her curriculum and in the larger world of math at Roosevelt."

Jani Selven, *Third Grade Teacher, Adams Elementary School*

"Jani is always encouraging the students to take responsibility for their learning. She encourages each student to remain calm and ask questions when learning at home gets frustrating and ALWAYS has something positive to say to her students, even when they struggle. She has been the biggest cheerleader for student success, which has encouraged the entire class to keep working their hardest to keep going."

Robin Seno, *Kindergarten Teacher, Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion School*

"Robin focuses on each child's personal needs and works with them to help them learn and grow. I meet her almost every day after my son is released from school, and she communicates what happens, why it happens and ways she is working on helping him, and how I can help him. She attends board meetings and PTO meetings for the betterment of our school. She's the best and I can see her intent and gusto."

Travis Sheaffer, *Band Director, North Eugene High School*

"Travis Sheaffer is a tremendous role model and mentor for me and many of my classmates, and he shows great work ethic and good humor while doing so. Although the job duties of directing two band programs may be immense, his remarkable work ethic and positivity ensure that he never becomes overwhelmed. He works nonstop to ensure students' growth and development as both musicians and individuals. Travis Sheaffer is a pillar of our community."

Ashley Shofner, *Second Grade Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Mrs. Shofner has been a beacon of light in the COVID-19 storm. She would post fun activities for students to do, pictures of her and her daughter doing fun activities, and even videos for the students to watch of her reading a book and singing. She has always been a great communicator, but has really gone above and beyond since distance learning started. I am so thankful that she is my son's teacher through this troubling experience."

Aurélie Sion, *Second Grade Teacher, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

"Aurélie has a gift for connection. She is perceptive and kind, and students feel comfortable sharing their needs and feelings with her. At the start of their time together each day, she engages with every single child and ensures students feel connected and ready to learn before the French content begins. As a native speaker from Belgium, her French is beautiful, and students aspire to speak like her."

Jesse Skoubo, *Social Studies Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Mr. Skoubo has always taught me and others to strive to be better. When I first met him as a sixth grader, I thought he was just like any other teacher. But over the course of the next three years, we built a close bond that led to me feeling more comfortable asking questions. He is an empowering, encouraging sharp shooter while still being humorous, intelligent and kind."

Steve Smith, *Social Studies Teacher, Eugene International High School*

"Students love having Steve as a teacher. He makes classes relevant, fun and interesting. Students are learning complex subjects, such as economics and global history, but he manages to make them love coming into class each day. In addition, Steve is an excellent collaborator who is creative, funny and always has a smile on his face. He teaches a rigorous curriculum, juggles the complex world of IB coordinating and truly leads our staff with positivity and wisdom."

Antje Snawder, *Kindergarten Teacher, Adams Elementary School*

"She is awesome. She is kind and caring. Best teacher a kid can ask for!"

Michael Stead, *Industrial Arts Teacher, Madison Middle School*

"Mr. Stead has had a profound effect on our community at Madison. His dedication to his craft is infectious building-wide. Students are taught kindness, gratitude and to work hard in his classes. Mr. Stead is first and foremost dedicated to the student as a learner. He is able to reach not just the minds but also the hearts of our students at Madison. I aspire to be able to teach my craft to his level of dedication and mastery."

Elly Steinbaugh, *Language Arts/Social Studies Teacher, Cal Young Middle School*

"Ms. Steinbaugh works very hard keeping her students focused and encouraging them to succeed. She has been a great inspiration and mentor to myself and all of my classmates. She is always interested in our ideas and thoughts concerning our assignments. Any student is lucky to have her as a teacher. Ms. Steinbaugh provides inspiration and support to students who are in need of her help."

Jacob Steinberger, *Director of Choirs/AP Music Theory, Churchill High School*

"Mr. Steinberger is a man who sacrifices for his students and puts his life's work into his job. Many of my passions come from this man's knowledge and guidance. He cares about his students and is very effective at his practices. I went from barely being able to sing to being ready for music theory and joining the Downing Street Singers. He is the light of my day at school."

Michael Sterling, *Social Studies Teacher, Churchill High School*

"Mike Sterling is a dedicated teacher who humbly goes the extra mile each and every day for his students. This total dedication manifests itself in many different ways: amazingly well-formed lessons, connection with students, and grading so many essays that you cannot even imagine. Mr. Sterling, as he is known, is a scholar who makes being a scholar cool and who has gone far beyond simply imparting knowledge; he has helped our students live and breathe their learning."

Courtney Stitt, *Math Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy*

"As a parent and parent volunteer, I see Mrs. Courtney working long hours alongside her co-workers to help students while actively encouraging parents to participate in their children's education. Mrs. Courtney is also present for PTA meetings, student-outing meetings, dance activities and coaching. She works tirelessly to get everyone on board with a clear understanding of the tasks—all with a super friendly demeanor and a tireless smile."

Kim Sullivan, *Special Education Teacher, Camas Ridge Elementary School*

"Kim brings her dynamic, joyful personality to her teaching, inspiring her students to love learning and modeling for her colleagues a deep dedication to each child and family she serves. Kim shares her heart so freely and generously, throwing her whole self into every lesson every day. She makes her classroom a fun and welcome environment of knowledge. She has been a leader in our district for many years, mentoring and championing dozens of teachers."

Amary Taylor, *Media Specialist, North Eugene High School*

"Amary has completely reinvented our library. She has purchased hundreds of engaging books for students and vastly expanded the library's collection of books so that students are literally putting themselves on wait lists to read. She is always an encouraging voice and a wealth of knowledge about what a student might like. She has cultivated a space in our school that is both welcoming and enlightening—the epitome of what a library should be."

Tyler Tjernlund, *Industrial Arts Teacher, North Eugene High School*

"Under challenging circumstances, Tyler has been able to develop programs supporting industrial arts and has transitioned classrooms to utilize current technologies to better serve the community and students. The main goal for his program is to help students develop skills that they can use within the community and to build the workforce of industrial arts for the future. He is dedicated to his program and helping students build a future of success."

Nancy Unruh, *Kindergarten Teacher, Edison Elementary School*

"Ms. Nancy's warm and welcoming nature, her enthusiasm for teaching and her patient manner help ease the new students into the elementary setting. She's caring, patient, knowledgeable, easy to get along with, hard-working, and goes above and beyond for her students. I've been so impressed with her handling of this new distance learning challenge and the way she cares for the kids. She has held weekly parent meetings to ensure we are all doing okay, our children are doing okay, and answering any questions we have. One can tell she genuinely cares for each of her students. We are so lucky to have her!"

Michael Washburn, *AVID Teacher, Sheldon High School*

"Mr. Washburn is the epitome of a great teacher. Sheldon High School is lucky to have such a caring teacher who is willing to think outside the box for the success of his students. He offers support to his students in a way that holds them accountable for their work, their choices and their successes. He is not opposed to helping his students find a way to succeed by offering suggestions specific to their personal learning style."

Joy Wells, *Social Studies Teacher, Churchill High School*

"Joy recognizes students' different needs, works incredibly hard to make sure her students learn, and are safe and happy. She also provides her students a safe space to get work done. She has a snack box in her room for kids who are hungry, she recognizes that hungry kids don't work well! I've never seen her NOT encourage us to succeed. She's been helping me all year by trying to make sure I understand the material and pass the class."

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

"Catherine is the perfect example of what a teacher should be. She challenges her students, knows how to have fun with them, stays extremely connected to students and parents, and rewards the students for their hard work. She takes the time to communicate to each and every parent to make sure the student has enough time to fix flaws before grading. She makes learning very rewarding."

Erika Wolf, *First Grade Teacher, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

"Madame Wolf is, quite simply, an extraordinary teacher. She is enthusiastic, engaging and organized. She honors culture, recognizes equity and brings out the best in her students. From whole group instruction to individualized supports, she is excellent at crafting lessons and learning opportunities. Our child has just shone this year in English language arts, math and French, and that is a credit to Madame Wolf."

Stacie Yarbrow, *Music Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Stacie Yarbrow is an outstanding music teacher and colleague. She goes above and beyond for her students and is a true team player. Stacie makes her music lessons very engaging and students always look forward to going to music class. She has written and received many grants for all kinds of music equipment that kids have the joy of playing. She has helped many of us with lessons during online learning with patience, kindness and always her great smile."

Mary Youngblood-Lee, *Social Studies Teacher, Sheldon High School*

"Recently, I observed an activity in Mary's classroom where students researched and shared their views on a number of civic topics related to the Constitution and civil rights. Mary is terrific at engaging students by honoring their views and having high expectations for their intellect and ability. She is bold in her curriculum, staunch in her defense of equity and passionate about educating her students."



**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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for providing grants
to the ACE Champions.**