

WELCOME TO
EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J
2019 ACE AWARDS



May 2, 2019





North Eugene High School
Thursday, May 2, 2019
5:30–7:00 p.m.

5:30

Reception

Music by North Eugene High School Jazz Ensemble

6:00

Awards Ceremony

Performance by

Hi-Tones

Introduction

Matt Templeman, Emcee

Welcome Remarks

Dr. Gustavo Balderas, Superintendent

Awards Presentation

Alicia Hays, Board Chair

Matt Templeman, Emcee

Dr. Gustavo Balderas, Superintendent

2019 ACE Award: Administrator

2019 ACE Award: Classified Staff

2019 ACE Award: Volunteer

2019 ACE Award: Teacher & Licensed Specialist

2019 ACE Award: Lifetime Achievement

Good Night

Matt Templeman, 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 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. (Asterisk indicates Lifetime Achievement nominee.)

2019 ACE AWARD NOMINEES



Administrators

Molly Gillett, *Principal, ECCO/Eugene Education Options*

"Molly is an outstanding administrative leader. She has an unwavering commitment to students, continuously seeks ways to encourage staff to grow professionally and personally, and is a strong advocate for equity on behalf of students and staff. Molly takes the time to slow down and consider the voices at the table when making decisions. She consistently encourages, supports and listens to staff and students."

Cheryl Linder*, *Director, Student Services Department*

"For 40 years, Cheryl has been dedicated to serving our students with special needs, and the school staff and systems that support their learning. She has tirelessly led her department staff as they face compelling and competing priorities every day. Most importantly, Cheryl is a dedicated ambassador in schools for families whose students need a more personalized educational experience in order to experience success. We appreciate her long and dedicated service."

Chris Mitchell, *Principal, Cal Young Middle School*

"Chris is an outstanding administrator. He is a thoughtful and caring professional, respected by students and teachers alike. He is a strong leader who encourages all students to be their best and to excel in academics and extracurricular activities. He shares his knowledge and expertise with his staff. His management style is respectful and inclusive. He is dedicated and inspires commitment in others. He goes out of the way to accommodate new staff and parents. Cal Young is lucky to have Chris."

Mike Riplinger*, *Principal, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Mr. Rip has created a strong, congenial Awbrey Park community that makes everyone feel welcomed. He teaches students about responsibility, respect and community. Mike welcomes the students every day, rain or shine, outside at the start of school, which is a nice way for the kids (and parents) to start the day. He has made the school so family friendly by creating monthly Awbrey Park family nights. You just feel like you belong."

Classified Staff

Heather Acharya, *Attendance Clerk, Spencer Butte Middle School*

"Heather stands out above the rest. She never stops, from lunch duty to dealing with a constant flow of students in and out of the office. Heather also coordinates many after-school events, including school fundraisers. Her obvious love for the students and enthusiasm for Spencer Butte make her very good at getting other people involved in volunteering! Heather always has the kids' interests in mind."

Yasmin Aguilar, *Bilingual/Bicultural Office Support, River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School*

"Yasmin is extremely knowledgeable and helpful. She interacts with students in a pleasant and calm manner, and always has a smile to share. She also communicates well with staff and parents. She never appears overwhelmed or agitated, regardless of how many people are demanding her attention simultaneously. Her demeanor helps my student be calm and feel safe. As a parent, I am very happy knowing she is there."

Hayward Alexander, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Fox Hollow Program*

"Hayward is patient, kind and passionate about his students. He is a mentor for students, a team player with colleagues and a genuinely awesome guy to be around. He radiates caring, commitment, and high expectations with each interaction. Students know he cares about them and that he is 100% committed to their growth as learners and individuals. Kids and staff alike want to do and be better for him. He brings out the best in all of us."

Ana Boyd, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Cal Young Middle School*

"Ana is one of those individuals who comes into the lives of staff and students and changes them for the better. She has a genuine love for her students and always sees the best in them. She has a heart of gold and positively impacts the lives of everyone around her. Ana is an incredible person and educator."

Ryan Brown, *Custodial Maintenance Coordinator I, Holt Elementary School*

"Ryan does a myriad of daily feats: setting up and breaking down cafeteria tables, cleaning up messes, shoveling snow, resupplying the staff room, informing staff about safety hazards and security concerns, waxing the floor, and using the push broom, mop bucket, table wiper, dust bucket and garbage barrels to provide a clean, safe school. Holt's on-the-ball custodian helps students thrive in school and out. Thank you, Custodian Ryan!"

Joan Chu, *Food Service Assistant I, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Joan is like two cooks in one. She never stops moving around the kitchen! She is such a positive person and is always ready to help. She seems to love the fast pace of serving and moves as if she has eight arms like an octopus, serving kids their food trays while simultaneously dishing food into cups and loading up the trays, all with a big smile on her face. She is quite amazing and a big asset to Awbrey Park."

Deborah Dailey, *Homeless Student Liaison, Instruction Department*

"Deborah's front-line work with homeless students and families helps eliminate the barriers to school participation, ensuring that our neediest students can access an education each day. She is a staunch advocate and supports them with a 'by-any-means-necessary' attitude. This level of advocacy truly helps students and families feel connected to the school community. Deborah brings a collaborative spirit to this work, supporting new staff and helping them feel connected to the team that supports our students experiencing homelessness."

Joni de Saint Phalle, *Finance Clerk, South Eugene High School*

"Joni is always enthusiastic and positive, even though her job is very demanding and complicated. She is helpful and never seems to be bothered by being asked any question. Joni also is amazing with students. In particular, she really connects with students who struggle. She has them work with her as TA's, which gives them an often-needed sense of purpose. Joni is a great person who loves her job and excels at what she does."

Melody Fry, *Educational Assistant, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Melody is a rare gem who Awbrey Park is lucky to have. She is a kindergarten EA but also wears many other hats. She is the playground supervisor extraordinaire, watching kids, making boo-boos all better, helping kids settle differences and find friends to play with. She helps other staff when needed and has a wonderful sense of humor. Melody is just one of those selfless, kind people who makes life easier for those around her."

Angie Gee, *School Secretary, Chávez Elementary School*

"Angie is a dynamic employee who puts others first, especially our students and their families. She embodies the quality and caring that we want our students and families to see when they arrive. Despite her numerous responsibilities, when a family walks in the door, Angie greets them cheerfully and with respect. She also helps families in need and connects them with the available community resources. Angie is amazing! She is the heart of our school."

Linda Grape, *Federal Programs & Operations Coordinator, Instruction Dept.*

"Linda encourages students and staff to reach their fullest potential. Her efforts truly match our vision of every student connected to the community and empowered to succeed. Her level of care and responsibility translates to better opportunities for our students most at risk of failure. Linda represents the best interest of our schools and the district each day."

Kelly Greatwood, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Spring Creek Elem. School*

"Kelly exhibits all the best qualities of an EA. She is hard-working, respectful, calm, professional and, most importantly, an amazing advocate for children. She makes each of her students, who often struggle with academic, social and personal issues, feel like they are special. She pushes them to make the most gains possible. Kelly anchors whatever classroom she teaches in. She is invaluable to special education and to Spring Creek."

Megan Hazelton, *Food Service Coordinator I, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Megan cares about the kids, greets them by name, and always makes sure they have enough to eat. She teaches her student lunch helpers leadership and responsibility skills, and they love her! Megan has made the cafeteria a welcoming community place for kids to gather and eat. Megan is also a wonderful colleague and her happy nature is a pleasure to be around."

Maricela Hernandez, *Educational Assistant, Gilham Elementary School*

"Maricela is a loving, caring, enthusiastic, dedicated and supportive member of the Gilham staff and community. She is involved in all aspects of our school, in the classroom and out. She is a go-getter and willingly takes on new projects to support and encourage each student to be their best. Maricela is a much-valued and vital part of the Gilham community."

Julie Hopkins, *Library/IMC Assistant, Howard Elementary School*

"Julie is the positive leader of Howard in every aspect imaginable. She does whatever is needed to help students and staff enjoy being at school. She works tirelessly to get the materials students or staff need and to find 'just the right book' to inspire students to read. She has a kind heart and helps students and staff in times of need. Julie selflessly gives whatever help is needed to make things better for everyone."

Karen Kingzett, *School Secretary, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Karen is a leader, a great communicator and a positive member of our school community. Although her job is demanding and stressful, Karen graciously supports students, parents and staff. She ensures that the logistical, day-to-day operations necessary for a functioning school are occurring. She also is a phenomenal collaborator in office meetings. Karen's dedication to the smooth functioning of Roosevelt is unmatched."

Cheryle Konold*, *School Secretary, McCornack Elementary School*

"Cheryle's commitment and caring for kids is evident in everything she does. She helps all students thrive and is always encouraging them to do, and be, their best. She also ensures our families feel connected and welcome. In every building she has worked in during her 30 years with 4J, administrators have marveled at her intuitive abilities to simplify systems and processes, enabling staff to work smarter and better. Cheryle leads with class and composure."

Regina Ligon, *Technology Integration Assistant, McCornack Elementary School*

"Regina is in the background of a lot of the amazing things that happen at McCornack. She's like the wind beneath the wings. Our school has won many grants and scholarships and, most recently, a student won the race for Oregon Kid Governor. Regina is behind many of these accomplishments. She also plays an important role in integrating technology into classroom instruction, which enhances student learning and engagement."

Melanie Namkoong, *Department Secretary, Eugene International High School*

"Melanie looks out for all students and staff in the South Eugene IHS community. She is patient, caring, enthusiastic and fun. Melanie is the strongest bridge between South Eugene and IHS. She has a wealth of knowledge about both schools and is a source of wisdom for students and staff. Melanie is always professional and responds well under pressure. She is a fantastic representative of our district and its values."

Trista Neuman, *School Secretary, South Eugene High School*

"Trista has very strong problem-solving skills and is particularly good at multi-tasking. She answers all kinds of questions with a lot of grace, never showing how serious and tough her job actually is. She ensures that the whole school is safe and operates with excellence. Trista makes her staff feel valued and encourages collaborative team behavior."

Jana Ouimet, *Cognitive Educational Assistant, Gilham Elementary School*

"Jana inspires students to feel confident in whatever they are attempting. She encourages each student to be at their individual best and is always going the extra mile to show that she believes in them. She connects with students and their families in a positive, supportive and encouraging way. Jana anticipates and finds solutions to problems that are potentially challenging for students, demonstrating her never-ending patience and understanding of their unique needs and differences."

Mary Peterson, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Roosevelt Middle School*

“Mary consistently supports students in a way that emphasizes their strengths and communicates a steadfast belief that they can be successful with effective effort. She works diligently to create an environment where students get the support they need. Students respond well to Mary’s positive attitude, calm demeanor and patient nature. As a result, she is highly effective at helping students. Her friendly and upbeat personality contributes significantly to the positive climate at Roosevelt.”

Mary Pat Piazza, *Educational Assistant, Gilham Elementary School*

“Mary Pat is always smiling! She is so caring with everyone she comes in contact with. Mary Pat wears many hats at Gilham—crossing guard, cafeteria supervisor and recess monitor, to name a few. Despite her major responsibilities, she is always so upbeat and positive with the students. She is an important part of the Gilham community.”

Jeanette Prior, *Educational Assistant, Chávez Elementary School*

“Jeanette is available at every level, taking time to help students, their families, and also fellow staff members who need support and ideas for whatever circumstance may arise. She inspires creativity in every possible way. Jeanette helps make kindergarten a successful training ground for our youngest students just starting their school journey.”

Julie Quelch, *Federal Programs & Operations Coordinator, Instruction Dept.*

“Julie is patient and kind with both staff and families, giving everyone a sense of well-being and respect with every interaction. She brings so much care and joy to her work coordinating BEST and other programs that enrich kids’ experiences in our schools. She is incredibly organized and works tirelessly to help our staff learn and grow, which results in tremendous, positive outcomes for our students.”

Rick Raish, *Student Supervision Assistant, North Eugene High School*

“Rick makes it a point to connect with all students and express an interest in their performance. He is as big a cheerleader for a good test score as for an athletic achievement. He helps support faculty by shepherding students back to class and supporting a culture of achievement. Rick is an ambassador for our school. He helps parents connect to school and feel listened to. His attitude is positive and supportive and he never quits.”

Kym Ramsing, Attendance Clerk, Eugene Education Options

"Kym is a true champion for our students and our schools. She outperforms every day and makes meaningful connections with students, families and staff. Kym knows and greets each student by name, and keeps track of their needs like they are her own children. Kym brings sunshine to those of us lucky enough to be her colleagues. She works both independently and with our school culture team to uphold old traditions and introduce new ones that allow us to find cheer every day."

Jason Rau, Warehouse Operations Assistant, Warehouse

"Jason epitomizes what it means to be a hard-working 4J employee. He goes above and beyond in his duties and always has a great attitude. Not only is Jason an incredible asset to our department, but also an asset to the whole district. Since Jason has been with 4J, I have noticed a huge improvement in how items and mail are delivered. Outside of Jason's job, he volunteers at school events. We appreciate all he does!"

David Robinson, Plumber Specialist, Facilities Department

"Dave is an outstanding employee who performs difficult work each day and yet manages to keep an upbeat attitude. He has worked for the district for many years and uses that wealth of experience to develop creative repairs and improvements that are both effective and inexpensive. He is a great communicator, collaborating with school staff prior to making adjustments. Overall, he is an outstanding individual who deserves recognition not only for his attitude but also for his skills and knowledge."

Corey Rusco, Custodian, Arts & Technology Academy

"ATA wouldn't be ATA without Corey. Obviously, a school custodian is of utmost importance—without a good custodian, things don't run! But Corey's not just a phenomenal custodian, he's a great human being and the glue that holds the entire Churchill region together. He has a sincere, comforting presence and friendship with every person in our building—students, staff, admin and families alike. We are so lucky to have him at ATA."

Jeremy Rutledge, Custodian, Awbrey Park Elementary School

"Whenever something needs to be fixed, cleaned, moved or whatever, you can hear him being called on the radio, 'Jeremy, you are needed in the ...' and no matter what it is, he takes care of the problem without complaint. I don't think anything rattles him! Jeremy also plays with the kids during PE class, which is a highlight for them. Jeremy is such a helpful and fun co-worker. I don't know what we would do without him."

Doug Simonsen, *Custodian, Spencer Butte Middle School*

"Doug does exemplary custodial work, forms strong relationships with staff and students, and has tremendous integrity. He always has a positive attitude and a good sense of humor. Doug notices kids, learns their names, and steps in when he sees situations where kids need extra help and support. Those of us lucky enough to work with him at Spencer Butte know this place would fall apart without him."

Claire Smith*, *Elementary School Assistant, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Claire goes above and beyond her duties as office assistant every day. She generates useful ideas, does the necessary planning, communicates effectively to staff and then follows through. Claire is a master at supporting kids with their social, emotional and behavioral needs, as well as tutoring kids sent to the office with work. She serves this community with great care, expert knowledge and experience. Her years of dedication and hard work have made Awbrey Park a welcoming place for students and families."

Meladie Sorensen, *Transition Specialist, Transition Education Network*

"I have never worked with anyone more dedicated to their job, and with such integrity, as I have seen in Meladie. She works tirelessly to coordinate and support quality job sites in the community for intellectually disabled students. She also works with the students to help them build the skills necessary for competitive employment after leaving school. Her caring and compassion are felt on a day-to-day basis. She is a true role model for students and staff."

Elton Steyding, *Autism 1:1 Educational Assistant, South Eugene High School*

"Elton stands out above others because of his remarkable dedication to all students. His ability to enhance a student's educational experience and to work closely with his team to provide the best access to learning for all students is outstanding. Elton has a unique adeptness at connecting with students, particularly with those who struggle with behavior challenges, and helping them confidently connect with others and feel success in school."

Sandy Stinnett*, *Cognitive Educational Assistant, Transition Education Network*

"Sandy's attitude and approach set her apart. She is positive and smiling, no matter what, and always focused on our students' needs. In addition to teaching independent living skills to developmentally disabled students, she enriches their lives by organizing interesting field trips. Her careful and thoughtful preparations ensure that the trips run smoothly and everyone has fun. She is a behind-the-scenes master and I don't know what the program will do without her."

Deborah Stowell, *Food Service Coordinator II, Holt Elementary School*

"Deb is a superstar! She has an outsized impact on the culture at Holt because of the many things she does, during work hours and outside of work hours, to make Holt a special school. She is kind, respectful and student-friendly in her communication. She is so desirous and willing to do anything to make a student's day. She is a great role model for staff who feel her warmth and her desire to make a positive difference. Deb is one-of-a-kind and a treasure for Holt."

Connie Summers, *AV/Textbook Specialist, South Eugene High School*

"Most of us are not sure how Connie can do all that she does and keep track of everything—textbooks, laptops and other technology. She makes sure books are returned on time so that other classes can use them. She is amazing at getting materials returned and fines paid from students, even from those who are no longer at South. She is a wonderful and patient communicator. We value Connie!"

Ethan Tibbs, *Educational Assistant, Gilham Elementary School*

"Ethan is a true team player. He has taken on extra responsibility by being a House Leader this year. He puts in extra time and effort to ensure all students (and adults) in his house are taken care of. He goes the extra step of providing mentors for his house students with special needs. The relationships that have been formed between our house students are amazing and fulfilling for all who are involved. When you see him around the school, Ethan always has a smile on his face."

Heather Wilson, *Educational Assistant, Edison Elementary School*

"Heather is amazing at connecting with students, particularly hard to reach students. She recognizes and nurtures potential in students who are oftentimes lacking both an awareness of their own skill and an adult to help them build on it. She works tirelessly to foster an environment of equity and opportunity. Heather continually pushes all of us—students and staff—to be our best. She is a lifeline to many students and we are so lucky to have her as part of our community!"

Rose Winand, *Technology Support Specialist III, Technology Department*

"Rose is an absolutely selfless individual who devotes herself 100% to delivering the best service possible. She is incredibly responsive and has such a good way of connecting with others. Our entire staff has learned so much from her and we are very grateful to have her as a part of our team. She answers all tech questions, even the most basic ones, with the patience and grace of a saint. Rose sets a great example and is an inspiration to all."

Volunteers

Amy Barrutia, *Gilham Elementary School*

"Amy is a creative and kind volunteer. She started a very popular program in our library that inspires students to select books based on our House system. Every time the students return to class after visiting the library, they have big smiles on their faces and are eager to read the books they checked out. She also goes on every field trip with us and is always offering to help. Gilham is a better place because of Amy's enthusiastic involvement!"

Alexis Borrevik, *Roosevelt Middle School*

"Alexis has been a consistent source of support for Roosevelt staff and students. As chair of Parents at Roosevelt (PAR) for the past two years, she has created educational and fun opportunities for our community. Alexis manages to organize these amazing events and recruit other volunteers to help make it all happen. Alexis's energy, passion and perseverance make her an incredible asset to our building."

Ed Chastain, *Gilham Elementary School*

"I can always count on Ed when I need an extra set of hands in class or on a field trip. He makes copies, helps prep for science experiments, assists students with class projects and answers their questions. He is always willing to go the extra mile to bring joy to the kids. Ed has a kind and generous heart and enjoys sharing it with students and staff."

Ashlee Dixon, *Gilham Elementary School*

"Ashlee spends countless hours sharing her talents and enthusiasm with the Gilham community as a leader of our PTO. She demonstrates dedication to school and district needs by representing Gilham on a number of communitywide teams. Ashlee brings people together to accomplish great things through transparent communication, unbridled optimism and a love of kids."

Nancy Fischer, *Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Nancy runs the Snack Pack program that she started as a teacher at Spring Creek, which provides much-needed weekend food to low-income families at our school. On top of managing every aspect of this huge project, Nancy volunteers in the fourth-grade classrooms to help students improve reading fluency and organize events. She is dependable, loves to work with children, and believes in each child's success. Nancy continues to make a difference in the lives of Spring Creek families and for that, we are extremely grateful."

Angela Nickerson, Gilham Elementary School

"Angela is incredibly supportive and a critical part of our classroom learning. Her help ensures that our students receive a quality education in a safe and engaging environment. I am grateful to have such a flexible, positive, understanding and conscientious volunteer like Angela. She's there for students, ensuring they have the tools they need to learn, encouraging students when they lose hope or tire, and empowering them to become the best versions of themselves."

Kimberle Overton, Chávez Elementary School

"Kim is a standout volunteer. She inspires students to reach their fullest potential with her patient and caring demeanor. She demonstrates her commitment to the Chávez community by volunteering in multiple classrooms, running library checkout, and being an active part of all school events. Her positive attitude makes Chávez a great place to be!"

Moira Querns, Holt Elementary School

"Moira is Holt's most committed volunteer, which is saying a lot because we have numerous amazing volunteers! She helps in the front office almost every day and is a key member of the school leadership. She is unfailingly kind, respectful and empathetic with our students. Her communication skills are outstanding. She keeps her cool when circumstances are challenging. Her competence in virtually every respect is amazing. Moira's dedication to Holt is so appreciated."

Jessica Rasmussen, Family School

"Jessica is a key communicator in the Family School community. The many and various tasks Jessica completes have two important factors in common: they are for the common good and are done in the background with no expectation of acknowledgment. She is kind, she is supportive, and she builds up and supports all those with whom she comes into contact. Jessica demonstrates excellence in her commitment to bettering public education for all."

Doreen Vaughan, Cal Young Middle School

"Doreen has coordinated the lunch mentor program at Cal Young for the last few years. She is a phenomenal communicator, organizer, facilitator and leader for what has become the district's largest lunch mentor team. Doreen not only sets up students for success in the mentor program by coordinating with office staff to get them passes and connecting with teachers as students' schedules change but also equips community members with all the tools and supports they need to thrive as mentors."

Teachers & Licensed Specialists

David Adee*, *Music Teacher, River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School*

"David is the embodiment of joy. He teaches music with verve, passion, curiosity and energy. Attending his class is like taking a time out from the stresses of daily life. He takes the time to get to know every student and their family. He sees potential in every child and nurtures their interests and dreams. David is enthusiastic, fun-loving and a professional musician who shares his knowledge and love for music with all his students."

Lee Baker, *Counselor, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Lee is an intelligent, gifted and enthusiastic educator. He performs the diverse and challenging responsibilities of a school counselor extremely well. He is highly competent, professional and responsible. Lee is both a school counselor and a school leader. His interpersonal skills and interactions with students, families and staff are excellent. Lee's good nature, professionalism and fun-loving attitude make him a great co-worker."

Richard Bell, *Home Instruction Teacher, Student Services Department*

"Richard has been the backbone of home instruction for many years. His commitment to our most vulnerable students can't be overstated. Richard is kind, gentle and a master teacher. He takes complex concepts and breaks them down in a way that each of his students can comprehend. He helps those unable to attend a traditional school find success, value, community and a zest for learning. He is truly magnificent!"

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

"Stephanie is one of those teachers who makes learning interesting and uses multiple types of teaching techniques to help each student excel. She brings literature and poetry to life for students. Stephanie has excellent classroom management, which in middle school is quite an achievement! She also has a great sense of humor that the kids all enjoy."

Kathleen Brandt, *Third Grade Teacher, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Kathleen is so genuine, patient and excellent at seeing each child's potential. She sees where they need support and growth, and where they need to be reminded of the rules. She teaches them how to check in with themselves and learn emotional maturity. She makes school a positive experience each and every day. Kathleen is a special teacher who goes above and beyond for her students."

Sheryl Carroll, *Special Education Teacher, Edison Elementary School*

"Sheryl works in a variety of subject areas with students who have significant difficulty with learning. She has a way of meeting students where they are in their learning, appreciating their strengths, and making them feel proud of their success in education each day. Sheryl learns the regular education curriculum so she can help her students work toward meeting grade goals. She keeps learning fun and positive."

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

"Sebastian assists students who need some extra time or guidance to keep their learning focused. He works hard to help troubled kids succeed. It works, and he makes the kids want to come to school. His enthusiasm and genuine caring for the students make it all come together, and he'll go out of his way to help when needed. He is the everyday hero you want in schools."

Tammy Coleman, *Essential Skills Coordinator, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Tammy gives her students her all, every single day. She makes learning fun and engaging, while regularly adjusting her lessons to best meet the needs of her students. Tammy collaborates with other teachers and support staff to provide the most effective instruction at each level. Tammy is dedicated, inspirational, and a valuable person of support to the students and staff of the Willagillespie community."

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

"Patrice always puts her students first. One of her favorite sayings is, 'I was a mother before I was a teacher.' Patrice has a way of making every child feel special and bringing out the best work in all of them. She convinces every child that whatever they write is the best thing in the world! She also is very kind to and supportive of her coworkers."

Christie Creed, *Alternative Education Teacher, Eugene Education Options*

"Christie's job is not easy. She is tasked with reintegrating students who have become disconnected and disillusioned in school. She helps them unpack their school fears, set new goals, and rediscover the joys of learning and being as they wait to reenter school full time. Christie demonstrates an amazing sense of calm and encouragement for some of the most at-risk youth in our district. She makes them feel simultaneously cared for, safe and hopeful about their futures."

Desere Doan*, *Special Education Teacher, North Eugene High School*

"Desere is a passionate, patient and understanding teacher in North's Project Success program. She has always treated us, whether staff or student, as one of the family. Desere encourages each individual to grow and instills a growth mindset into the program. Through her encouragement, staff and students feel empowered to achieve their fullest potential. She is kind-hearted, considerate and has a good sense of humor."

Chris Dobson, *Music Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Chris is the most engaged teacher I've ever met. He provides a safe learning environment that makes every kid feel welcome. If anyone feels left out, they never feel scared to talk to him about it. His teaching helps so many kids focus more in school. He'll change things around if they don't work for everyone. Chris makes all students feel emotionally connected to their work."

Erica Dunn, *Third Grade Teacher, Chávez Elementary School*

"Erica is not only an amazing educator, but she teaches her students how to be good to each other and act as a family unit within the classroom. They are taught to love their neighbor and treat one another as they would like to be treated. Her goal is for each child to feel loved and cared for, as well as to be taught. She believes these are the building blocks to prepare a student to learn. She is a star educator and individual in every aspect."

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

"Dene's enthusiasm seems boundless, as does her drive to knit together a strong school community and fortify students as individuals. Parents marvel at how good she makes the students feel about themselves and how excited their children are for moving their bodies. She has infused our school community with a sense of purpose and worked to increase student physical literacy and fitness through fun, playful competitions and activities. Dene is an irreplaceable part of our bicultural/bilingual community."

Kristen Gianforti, *Counselor, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Kristen is the glue that holds everything together for our school community. She is a constant source of positivity, strength and support for all of us at Awbrey Park. Her office is always buzzing with students and staff looking for support and advice. She listens with care and speaks with intention, treating each person who walks into her office as if they are the most important person. Kristen works tirelessly for the students, families and staff of Awbrey Park."

Carrie Grabowski, *Fifth Grade Teacher, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

“Carrie is a dedicated teacher who does everything in her power to challenge her students academically, emotionally and socially. She encourages them to think more deeply and reflect more thoroughly—in French! It’s fun to see her get super excited when trying a new technique with students to help them find more success in French. It’s an honor working with her and watching her students build confidence in French.”

Jon Hellner, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

“Jonny is a born teacher and takes his role very seriously, while also keeping a good sense of humor. He changes lives by helping students and families feel valued, cared for and successful. Somehow, he removes a student’s burden of doubt in their own ability to learn, while not losing sight of their challenges which may, at times, be significant distractions to learning. He inspires students to develop the voices of kindness, caring and empathy.”

Lynn Hellwege*, *Math Teacher, Sheldon High School*

“Lynn inspires students to be great. He teaches them life lessons beyond mathematics. He encourages and motivates them to be the best they can be in math and beyond. He teaches in a way that all students can enjoy learning mathematics. The passion he has for teaching is evident and appreciated by his students.”

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

“Jeff has made it his life’s work to develop the potential of his students, athletes and fellow staff members. He serves as an organizational leader and team player and provides leadership within the school and community. Jeff has the deep respect and admiration of students, families, colleagues and community members. They see the passion, dedication, innovation and authenticity that are Jeff’s hallmarks. He has left an indelible mark on the hearts and lives of generations of Eugeneans.”

Krista Hocker, *Teacher on Special Assignment, Instruction Department*

“Krista’s high expectations for students, her commitment to classroom collaborative routines, and her pacing and timing could all serve as model lessons. She listens closely to process ideas and coherence of ideas, pauses the action, performs magic, and returns minutes later with the ideas ready and useful to others. 4J is lucky to have her superhuman powers to support our teachers and students.”

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

"Christie has been an over-the-top blessing as a mentor, role model and collaborator. The combination of her teaching technique, full-on empathy and level of sheer commitment to each and every child astonishes me every day. On top of all this, she has a joyful and infectious love of life and of teaching, and (most of all) of students. She is a life-changing educator."

Miho Hosaka, *Home Economics Teacher, North Eugene High School*

"Miho works with all students in the culinary program at NEHS to reach their highest potential. She puts in countless hours outside of school to facilitate caterings, lab practices and events for the community. She prepares her students to be industry ready. All of the skills shared with her students are done with equity, rigor and patience. Miho is determined, thoughtful and kind in all that she does."

Anne Hubbard, *Kindergarten Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Mrs. Hubbard is kind, encouraging and loves every child who walks through her door. Her passion for education and her students is evident every day. She meets students where they are while encouraging them to recognize what they can achieve. If you know Anne, then you have likely experienced her warmth, passion and energy. It's contagious. We feel so lucky to have her in our school and our community."

Kathryn Hulse, *First Grade Teacher, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Ms. Hulse is so good with the kids. She communicates well with the class and follows through with the boundaries she sets for the kids so that each child can learn in a respectful environment. Instead of making my student feel bad for being disruptive, she has worked with him to focus on doing better. She is a great communicator and has checked in with me every day on his progress. He has responded well to the challenge. Thank you!"

Kristina Hulse, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Krissy is loved by current and former students. She has the ability to connect with the most challenging of students, thereby developing a trusting relationship that allows them to recognize and work to their fullest potential. She is constantly striving to give her students the best classroom experience. You will often find students in her class helping out before and after school. She puts so much heart and effort into what she does."

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

"Sara is an inspiration to other teachers. She teaches with a calming presence and joy in her delivery. She is always looking to challenge her students. In just first grade, she teaches them to be aware of where they need to improve and take charge of their own learning. She inspires independent learners who love to learn."

Nathan Klarr, *PE Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"Mr. Klarr is a fantastic teacher who cares about all of his students and wants them to succeed, not only with physical education and health, but in life. He is a wonderful role model and the students look up to him. Even though my son is no longer in his class, Mr. Klarr still guides and helps him. He's become a mentor and my son really appreciates it."

Scott Klein, *Counselor, Corridor & Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion Elementary Schools*

"Scott has been such an asset to our schools. I am repeatedly amazed at Scott's endless patience and calm when dealing with stressful student behaviors. His support of students is not only crucial for individual students, but it allows the classroom teachers to move forward with the rest of the class so learning time is not lost. Scott is always ready to help others. His positive attitude elevates the morale of all staff."

Kyle Kordon, *Science Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Kyle is an extraordinary teacher and an outstanding role model for our school community. He goes out of his way to challenge, motivate and excite students to learn. Many times you can hear students talking about science, their experiments, or a future in science due to the impact of Kyle and his lessons. Kyle serves on every leadership team to help make our school a better place. He is the quintessential instructional leader and team player."

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

"Linda encourages students to learn and to enjoy their learning. She helps her students reach their fullest potential by engaging in their interests and meeting them at their level of ability. She cares about each student. She develops new materials and implements new learning strategies tailored to individual students' needs. Linda is very smart and has a huge heart."

Richard Leebrick, *Language Arts & Drama Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

“Richard is passionate about providing students opportunities to develop and explore their inner voice and identity through drama. He helps students gain confidence and social-emotional growth through theatrical performance. Richard organizes several events each year to make this happen for the students, doing much of the work on his own time. Staff listen closely to Richard because he reflects deeply about situations and provides powerful insight.”

Susan Lerch, *Special Education Teacher, Transition Education Network*

“Susan is a kind and compassionate teacher. She is dedicated to helping her students reach their fullest potential and treats all staff with respect. Susan promotes independence on an individual basis. She stands up for students’ rights. Susan treats all staff as equal team members and considers everyone’s perspective when making decisions.”

Marlee Litten*, *Staff Development Specialist, Student Services Department*

“Marlee works miracles every day to connect staff to resources and professional development opportunities to ensure a high quality of education in our schools. When there is work to be done, she names it and gets it done. When new challenges come, she doesn’t flinch, ever. She simply nods her head and says, well, let’s do this too. I am a better person and leader because of the opportunity to work alongside Marlee.”

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

“Debra has helped my autistic student gain confidence, volunteer more in class and build friendships. Debra has been such an excellent role model for her. She has been a wonderful resource for my daughter when she needs academic support or just a kind ear to listen. She is the kind of case manager you dream of—always responsive, helpful and in your corner. She is a blessing.”

Melissa Mares, *Kindergarten Teacher, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

“Melissa provides a healthy balance of warmth and academic rigor in her classroom. She goes out of her way to teach (and reteach) socio-emotional skills and help shy students find their voices. Melissa’s calm manner of instruction is so beneficial to her students. She models kindness to her students every day and they love her for it!”

Dayna Mitchell*, Title I Teacher, Spring Creek Elementary School

"Dayna is incredibly dedicated, calm and caring. She always puts students first and works hard to find the correct curriculum that assures each student a pathway to success. Dayna mentors other educators and her leadership skills are amazing. Her positive spirit and can-do attitude is an inspiration to all of us. We are so lucky at Spring Creek to have a colleague like Dayna!"

Yareli Montaña Ramirez, Second Grade Teacher, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School

"Yareli is a true force of energy and creativity, always trying to reach and engage each one of her students. She loves to surprise her students with new classroom decorations, stations or learning experiences. She also does a great job of communicating with parents and keeping them updated on the latest things going on in second grade. We are so lucky to have her."

Sarah Jane Moore, Second Grade Teacher, Holt Elementary School

"SJ brings compassion and high-quality instruction to her students. She is a committed educator who reinforces what's working to fuel her students' success and growth in academic, behavioral and social learning. Her relationships with parents are positive because they see how much she cares and that she will do what it takes to support her students' success. SJ brings enthusiasm, strength and humor to fellow staff members."

Alex Patton, Advanced Math Teacher, Churchill High School

"Alex is one of the hardest working teachers I've had. Not only does he take time out of his day to lead the drama department, but he also teaches math in a way that inspires every student whom he comes into contact with. He engages his students with his theatrical voice. He also supports students who struggle with test anxiety and struggle with general math concepts."

Patricia Polter, French & Language Arts Teacher, Monroe Middle School

"Patricia's creativity and resourcefulness provide her students with many opportunities to learn in a variety of ways. I am impressed with her ability to reach each of her students in a way that engages them and builds their self-confidence and academic skills. She is passionate about her work and willingly takes on new responsibilities. She is a role model because of her leadership, faith in people and determination to ensure others are cared for."

Jennifer Potter, Title I Coordinator, Holt Elementary

"Jenny is incredibly dedicated and competent and puts forth enormous energy into fulfilling the many roles she plays at our school. Her positive, calm and nurturing personality makes students feel safe and valued in her groups. She gets kids excited about reading and math and works to enhance their learning experiences outside of school too. She is a master teacher and an outstanding leader for our Title I program."

Sarah Prater, Teacher on Special Assignment, Instruction Department

"Sarah has led several important initiatives this year that have greatly impacted 4J students and teachers. Her literacy training sessions for K-12 teachers have made a huge impact on student success. Sarah also is working hard to pilot reading interventions that support our most vulnerable students and has written a grant to fund a K-2 literacy program. Her work has helped teachers enhance student success."

Tracy Reed, Kindergarten Teacher, Chávez Elementary School

"Tracy welcomes kindergarteners into her classroom with genuine love and a thoughtful, creative program that will lead these 5-year-olds to progress smoothly to first grade. She teaches with a calm mindset and deliberate plan to help each student succeed. Tracy is available at every level, taking the time to help students, their families and fellow staff members in need of support and ideas for whatever circumstance that may arise."

Angela Ruzicka*, Science & Math Teacher, Cal Young Middle School

"Angie exceeds every expectation of a teacher, leader, community member and communicator. She skillfully adjusts her lessons in real time, based on in-class observations of student progress and knowledge of her learners. She is focused on equity and helping students reach their maximum potential. The district and broader education community are fortunate to benefit from her enthusiasm, knowledge and skills."

Elise Salmond, Kindergarten Teacher, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School

"Elise brings joy and laughter to her kindergarten class. She goes above and beyond with each student. She continues the connection with her kinders throughout their elementary school years. Sometimes kids *and* their parents are scared on the first day of kindergarten! On both my students' first day of school, she welcomed all the parents and family members alongside the kids. She put everyone at ease with her sense of humor and evident love of her students."

Deon Saraceno, *Social Studies Teacher, Eugene International High School*

"Deon guides her 9th grade students through a process of self-reflection, self-discovery and self-actualization. This process is essential to their growth into young adults who are kind, healthy, socially aware and with the personal agency to be leaders of their own lives. She is skilled at engaging students' interests through instruction that is both relevant to their lives and timely in relation to current and world events. She is a staff leader and steps up to support her colleagues. Deon is a rare jewel among educators."

Jennifer Scurlock, *Language Arts Teacher, Churchill High School*

"I've never seen a teacher so passionate about her job as Ms. Scurlock. She has a busy schedule, but she comes in with a lot of energy and always wants to help. She encourages us to look into current issues and apply what we learn to our lives. Although her classes are advanced, she keeps things well organized and is very open with us. I've never felt this comfortable talking to a teacher. It's very easy to look up to her. She is a very strong individual."

Marcy Siegrist, *Science Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Marcy has a true talent and the intuition to maintain an organized classroom with the perfect balance of making learning fun and keeping healthy, strict boundaries. Even students who usually don't respond well to authority are respectful and listen to what she has to say. Marcy has a big heart and love for her students and colleagues. She is an overall amazing human being, and I am so honored and happy to have her at RMS."

Roxanne Simpson, *First Grade Teacher, Gilham Elementary School*

"Roxanne makes things happen! She spearheaded the Gilham House system, which enables students to be connected to a mentor at school. The program has been so fun and attendance has improved because students love it. The house system is changing the climate of our school for the better. Without her, we would not be doing this program, and it takes someone with a huge heart to be willing to take this on."

Linda Smart, *Social Studies Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Linda does a great job helping the kids think beyond just themselves. They can see outside their little world and how their actions can impact others. My super shy daughter entered a schoolwide essay contest that Linda organized about how to be a community helper and was selected to read her essay in front of the entire school. For her to have the confidence to do that, just shows what a huge impact Linda has had on her. Linda is a gift."

Lodi Soderholm, *Advanced Math Teacher, Churchill High School*

"Lodi works so hard for the Churchill math department and truly cares for students and staff. Teaching is a stressful job. I could easily have been another statistic who leaves the profession within 5 years, but Lodi believed in me. She made me feel welcome and a part of the CHS math team. Lodi convinced me that I can be a good teacher."

Michelle Squires, *Fourth/Fifth Grade Teacher, Twin Oaks Elementary School*

"Michelle is a teacher who inspires students to reach beyond what they think they can accomplish. She teaches students the power of 'yet' and the importance of the growth mindset. She epitomizes what it means to be an educator. She is passionate, dedicated, selfless and determined not to give up on the people who need her the most—her students. She is a strong advocate for her colleagues and the profession of teaching."

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

"When school came back in session after the 4-day hiatus due to the snowstorm in late February, Mike and his students were seen shoveling snow and removing broken and damaged tree limbs and stacking them in easily accessible piles. This is well above and beyond the normal curriculum and helped the facilities crews immensely. Teaching life skills is imperative in this day and age. I can't thank him or his students enough."

Zachary Stone, *Fifth Grade Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Mr. Stone has re-established a love of learning and a feeling of safety for my student. I asked my son why he likes school so much better now and he responded, 'I know Mr. Stone has my back.' If that doesn't tell you what kind of a teacher Mr. Stone is, I don't know what else could. He is deeply appreciated, a wonderful teacher and a joyful soul."

Randall Streets, *Kindergarten Teacher, Twin Oaks Elementary School*

"Teacher Randall has helped my daughter reach her fullest potential and made her feel so welcome after we moved here in the middle of the school year. She wasn't reading previously and now, with the help of Teacher Randall, she is reading to us every night! He is so kind and she has been learning a lot about communicating her feelings, which is great! I am so happy we have him as a teacher."

Katrina Sugar, *Kindergarten Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Katrina cares for each student individually. She also takes the time to talk to each parent and knows their names. Katrina has great structure and routine in her classroom. She makes sure each child is growing in all areas needed. Katrina makes each student feel special. She does a great job helping children understand each step of becoming a new student at Howard. She makes her classes fun, and the children are excited to go to school and learn."

Cathy Sullivan*, *Second Grade Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Cathy is a phenomenal teacher. She is the first teacher to arrive in the morning and the last to go home in the evening because she wants everything to be prepared so that she can focus solely on her students while they are with her. Students enter her room eager to see her and learn, and they leave smiling at the end of the day. When someone is having a more challenging day, she finds whatever support that child needs to succeed."

Lynette Williams, *Teacher on Special Assignment, Instruction Department*

"Lynette has been an incredible leader during both the world language and language immersion curriculum adoptions. She has spent countless hours working with language teachers to develop criteria, screening and piloting curriculum, and supporting teachers through the process. Lynette is able to do this challenging work because she is an exceptional teacher, first and foremost. Lynette sees the big picture of education and is always focused on our students."

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

"Bobbie is an extraordinary asset to our school. As an AVID instructor and the head of our journalism CTE program, Bobbie helps students figure out who they are and what they want in this world by giving them real-life skills and experiences. Bobbie is everywhere at SEHS—at games, plays and concerts—cheering on the kids and the adults who work with them. She is a true leader in the most compassionate sense and guides everyone with her words of wisdom and inspiration. She is respected by all."

Lisa Winter, *Special Education Teacher, McCornack Elementary School*

"Lisa has exceeded every expectation I never even knew that I had entering into the sometimes scary and overwhelming realm of special education. She has helped our daughters grow and mature, strive to meet their goals and hone in on their interests to make an impact on their learning. She helped us advocate for additional services and has always offered a safe learning space with open arms and unconditional love and support to every child and family she serves. Her passion truly shines!"

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

"Mme Wolf is very effective in guiding students through the ups and downs of behavior issues. My son has always loved school but was going through a rough time. Mme Wolf was very calm and firm with him. She taught the other students to show empathy as everybody makes mistakes or has a tough time at some point. She also used positive feedback to encourage my son to do better and eventually, over a few weeks, he got back on track."

Kyle Yamada, *Social Studies Teacher, Eugene International High School*

"Kyle is a student advocate, a teacher advocate and an every-human-deserves-kindness advocate. He makes learning fun for students by creating a relevant curriculum that the students relate to and remember. Kyle has no fear when it comes to working with students and will even create a rap song if the occasion calls for it! Kyle is generous with his energy in the classroom, mentoring of students and advocacy for education. It is an honor to work beside him."



**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!





**EUGENE
EDUCATION
FOUNDATION**

excellence. together.

**A special thank you to the
Eugene Education Foundation
for providing grants to the ACE Champions.**

Dessert and flowers compliments of:

VALIC

Kris Kartub, Financial Advisor

