

**Eugene  
School  
District**



# **2021 ACE Awards**

## **A Champion in Education**

**Virtual Awards Ceremony**  
**June 3, 2021**  
**6 p.m.**

### ***Awards Presentation***

Cydney Vandercar, Interim Superintendent

*Administrator & Supervisor Champion*

*Classified Staff Champion*

*Teacher & Licensed Specialist Champion*

*Lifetime Achievement Award*

Nominees are invited to participate in the ceremony via Zoom.  
The ceremony will be livestreamed on 4J's Facebook page:  
[www.facebook.com/4jschools](http://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 & Supervisor**

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.

### **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.

\*There is no volunteer award category this year as school volunteers have been limited due to the pandemic.

# 2021 ACE AWARD NOMINEES



## Administrators & Supervisors

**Chris Benz**, *Assistant Principal, Kennedy Middle School*

"Mr. Benz is an amazing asset in 4J, and I would like to recognize his compassion, genuine care, and concern for students. I cannot say it enough how amazing it is to have someone who follows through with communication, can be depended upon to help, and has an amazing ability to connect with students, even through Zoom! He truly goes the extra mile to problem solve. His commitment to help keep students engaged in school is an outstanding example of how school leadership should be."

**Jill Cuadros**, *Regional Manager, Nutrition Services*

"Jill helped launch nutrition services's focus on a more scratch-based cooking style so that kids can enjoy nutritious, yummy, 'home-cooked' food. She really puts the kids first in her thinking of what they want to eat. She encourages staff to strive to do the best they can even if it feels like failure is the only option. She wants the best for kids and the staff at every school and goes out of her way to help in any way she can. Jill is a Super Rock Star!"

**Andy Dey**, *Director of High Schools, Instructional Services Department*

"Andy Dey gives support and sets an expectation for employees to be the best that they can be for both the district and the students. He gives the freedom to grow and make good decisions, but also sets parameters for tasks and goals. Andy has carved out a real, viable place for the NATIVES program. He makes the NATIVES program know that they make a worthy and important contribution to the district's educational mission."

**Erin Gaston**, *Principal, Howard Elementary School*

"Erin is efficient, effervescent and supportive to students, families and staff. She is the ideal principal in a pandemic. She helps keep hopes and expectations for student success high. She leads by example, with great compassion, and through frequent consultation with Howard's staff and leadership team. She is a coach as much as an 'administrator.' She gives others credit in a humble and kind way, but leads firmly when needed. It's amazing the job she's done in her FIRST YEAR as an elementary principal."

**Melissa Ibarra**, *Principal, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Melissa Ibarra has been a great leader since she started as BV principal in 2016. However, this year, more than ever, she has demonstrated how great she is at supporting her staff, students and community. She believes in the authenticity of her school and is a true believer in bilingualism, biculturalism and biliteracy. She encourages her teachers to teach with positivity and authenticity, doing everything within her power to make them feel empowered as educators. She was once a great teacher and is now an excellent leader."

**Mike Ingman**, *Principal, Sheldon High School*

"Mike Ingman had a lot on his plate when he arrived as the new Sheldon principal almost two years ago. He immediately set to work to strengthen relations between staff and administration, doing so with a good sense of humor and the willingness to dive deep to the root of the issues. Mr. Ingman doesn't take himself too seriously and is totally willing to take the blame, even if the blame isn't really his. He'll often say that it's his job as the principal—that everything is his responsibility. He truly wants the best for our school."

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

"There were many times throughout comprehensive distance learning when I felt down, defeated and lost. Every time I talked with Joel, I would leave feeling re-energized, supported and heard. Joel is a student-first administrator who is an excellent leader and communicator. He continually has my back working with struggling students. My job is much easier because of his support. Students succeed better with Joel in their corner."

**Garry McCready**, *Information Systems Manager, Technology Department*

"Garry works tirelessly behind the Eugene School District 4J scene to keep the information systems running as smoothly as possible. He is not a classroom teacher, but he has the right mix of qualities to excel as one—patience, humor, a thoughtful demeanor and a supportive nature. These qualities also benefit those for whom he provides supports, from superintendent to student, as the district's information systems manager."

**Paula Nolan**, *Alternative Education Administrator, Eugene Education Options*

"Paula Nolan has achieved absolutely remarkable success in managing the Eugene Online Academy, as well as 4J's alternative education programs, in this year of all years. While families in need of creative support surged in and out of Eugene Online Academy, which mushroomed to become one of the largest programs in 4J without the years to create needed support systems, Paula led the way. She took our breath away with her calm, supportive devotion, and her inclusive, focused process."

**Lavinia Page**, *Principal, Gilham Elementary School*

"Lavinia is an absolutely amazing principal. She has brought superior leadership to Gilham as a new principal under such difficult times. We feel so fortunate to have her not only join the Gilham family, but lead us with her amazing talents and unbelievable ambition as we move through a year where change has been the key ingredient. We marvel at her positive enthusiasm, remarkable memory, and over-the-top knowledge and abilities."

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

"Mike Riplinger's enthusiastic, kind and approachable demeanor with kids, parents and staff creates an environment where all are welcome and safe to try new things. He is a steward in our community, leading by example at events off campus, in the meeting room and in the classroom. Always in the middle of the action, he handles the range of things thrown at him, from the joyful moments to the most difficult, with grace. We are truly blessed to have him as the leader of our Awbrey Park family!"

**Sun Saeteurn**, *Principal, Monroe Middle School*

"Sun is such an inspiration! His team-approach leadership style is encouraging and inspirational. He encourages students to learn and enjoy their learning through humor and enthusiasm. He inspires teachers to connect with students and meet their specific needs. Building the Monroe Mustang culture is super important to him, and he has been such a game changer for our school. He puts so much heart in the building and reinforces a positive culture by interacting with students through making videos, donating to students in need, and always being approachable and reliable."

**Trevor White**, *Custodial Supervisor, Facilities Department*

"Trevor White is the unsung hero of our school's COVID-19 preparedness regiment. In September, he was given some random displaced bus drivers to join the custodial department, one of those being myself. I have been welcomed with open arms and given responsibilities and encouragement that is unequalled. Trevor is an upbeat, positive supervisor. He has had his 'boots on the ground' since Day 1. As the pandemic evolved, so did Trevor's resolve to have our schools' protection in place."

**Larry Williams**, *Principal, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Larry actively contributes to the professional growth of all staff. He hires and supports all staff to be better in their jobs and often sees potential that the individual isn't aware of until encouraged. He is open to having hard conversations about teaching, learning, race, data, behavior or bias with both adults and students. He leads by example and is level-headed and practical in his approach and responses."

**Mike Yocum**, *Assistant Principal, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Mike is not only an 'encourager' of the top order—one who exhorts both teachers and students to achieve their higher selves—but he also is a consummate 'bridge maker' and communicator. Mike has an innate ability to speak 'with' people and not 'to' them—young or old, student, teacher or community member alike. Mike is a consummate 'servant leader.' His humility matched with his ability builds great trust and strong rapport with our staff, student body and community at large."

## Classified Staff

**Heather Acharya**, *Records and Scheduling Assistant, Spencer Butte Middle School*

"Heather realized that many of our higher risk students were not picking up their iPads and supplies. She organized drop-offs of supplies and technology so that the students could get what they need to learn, and she made sure to follow up with them. Heather is dedicated to supporting students and staff through kindness and love. She is focused on making our school the best place it can be for all who come through the doors."

**Melissa Andrews**, *Department Secretary, Eugene Online Academy*

"Eugene Online Academy would not be thriving or surviving without Melissa Andrews. She has done everything it takes to see EOA succeed; she has done a blowout job. Melissa has an impeccable and incredible work ethic, smarts, and a sincere joy for kids. Her smile and heart are what kids latch onto immediately. Melissa supports and encourages all students—she is like a teacher, counselor and mentor all in one for kids. She is a shining light in our EOA lives!"

**Kelly Ayres**, *Records and Scheduling Assistant, Roosevelt Middle School*

"As the registrar at Roosevelt, Kelly is detail oriented and thorough. She performs the functions of her job with efficiency and accuracy, always ensuring that students' grades, schedules, transcripts and records are meticulously maintained. On a daily basis, Kelly exceeds the expectations of her job description as she works to support students, staff and families. Kelly also supports students and families in the registration process, creates schedules that work for students and support their success, and connects students and families with other building staff who can provide support."

**Kim Blaser**, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Kim Blaser is outstanding in her knowledge of special education and is a role model and a great helper. She has a strong will and desire to help our kids and goes out of her way to do so. She helped us learn Zoom and made sure everything went smoothly. She has taught many students in a fun and positive way, making it look so easy when it really is not. She has trained many staff and helped them learn STAR (Strategies for Teaching Based on Autism Research) and various other special education curriculum."

**Randal Bonney**, *Custodial Maintenance Coordinator I, Adams Elementary School*

"Randy has a great organizational mind, keen eye for detail, the disposition of a serious steward of resources, and, well, a few opinions! The minimum recommendation is not good enough for Randy, and the hidden blessing is that we will never know the countless people his extra work has kept healthy. He is also a person who plans ahead, caring just as much about quality and quantity of work done during his absence (even though rare), and he leaves nothing unplanned."

**Joe Brainard**, *Student & School Coordinator, NATIVES Program*

"Every day, Joe supports the mission of 4J and the NATIVES Program, even more during these times of COVID-19. He continually Zooms with students individually and in group settings. He is supporting students to go to school, to Zoom in, to engage and participate, and to complete their class assignments. He continually checks on their emotions and feelings of isolation and loneliness, and he helps them work through those issues. As needed, he goes to homes with 'knock and talks' from a distance when students are feeling particularly distress or panicked."

**Phylcia Bullis**, *Attendance Clerk, Sheldon High School*

"Phylcia has a soft heart with a large capacity. She can tell when a student needs an extra check-in, and I've learned to rely on her instincts when she takes calls related to attendance. Awkward attendance patterns, student looks extra tired, guardian appears upset — these are all examples of what might grab her attention. Phylcia KNOWS students. She knows their names, their siblings, their guardians and she is often one of the first individuals I'll contact if I have concerns about a student."

**Katie Burns**, *Department Secretary, Student Services Department*

"Katie is a wonderful team player and so modest about it. She is very polite and supportive of her team members' needs. I know if I need something, I can reach out to Katie and my request for support and supplies are almost seemingly magically fulfilled. She is also an outstanding communicator, so concise and polite. Katie doesn't 'do' drama. She fosters a safe and positive department environment. She is honest, fair and awesome."

**Linda Castle**, *Administrative Assistant, Transportation Department*

"Linda is integral to the organization and overall functioning of the 'shop.' She collates information on the district's vehicles (buses, facilities, machinery, etc.) and makes sure that 4J is responsible to the public by taking as good of care as possible of its expensive equipment. She is also very knowledgeable about how the district functions since she's been here for many years. Her efficiency and know-how shouldn't be understated. She is kind, direct and accountable."

**Doris Chastain**, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Adams Elementary School*

"Doris has innovative and creative ideas for how to support students, which brings a richness to their school experiences and a lightness to what could otherwise feel (sometimes) like stressful days. She brings this same kind of thinking to collaborations with staff as we brainstorm ways to engage the larger school community. She has been unwavering in her belief that student success is at the forefront. She has been a proud district employee, demonstrating through her work how passionate she is about public education."

**Bernadette Conover**, *School Secretary, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

"Bernadette is often the first person you see when you walk into Charlemagne. It's evident that she pays careful attention to the students, the staff and the principal. She is direct with information, and she is dedicated to the school. If I were to give a metaphor to describe Bernadette, I would suggest 'captain of the ship.' She navigates the rough waters, handles the vast changes and continues to move forward without hesitation."

**Patricia Donohue**, *Educational Assistant, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Patricia came in every day to the building to help during the pandemic. Not only did she check in with staff about any assistance they needed, but she made copies of learning supplies and organized them so the team distributing them to families were able to manage the chaos perfectly. A great deal of our success in implementing both Seesaw and paper/pencil work at the kindergarten level is because of Patricia."

**Sarah Dreyer**, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Sarah has been an integral part of the Learning Center at our school for the last four years. She is a very dedicated and conscientious teacher and is very committed to 'getting it right.' We have seen our students meet and exceed their academic goals because of the extra miles Sarah puts in. Sarah cares about every student and works hard to empower them to do their best, every day."

**Debra Eichner**, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Adams Elementary School*

"Debra does such a great job working with our fourth grader, who is in the Life Skills program. She is wonderful at keeping my student engaged and works hard to hold her focus over Zoom classes, which is a challenge. She also has been fantastic at communicating with us. She really helps us stay in the loop about our student's schedule. Debra really works hard to help my student learn and succeed."

**Kelly Fenley**, *Bilingual Educational Assistant, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Like so many 4J employees this year, Kelly's duties were shifted around for distance and hybrid learning. In a normal year Kelly would serve as a bilingual educational assistant for kindergarten classes, yet for distance learning this year she had the additional task of helping out as an EA for music classes. Kelly jumped right in and fully participated with the kids through dancing, singing and creating music. Her joy and translation helped the students feel more comfortable and better able to have fun over Zoom."

**Laurie Fierling**, *School Secretary, North Eugene High School*

"Laurie is more than a secretary. During this pandemic, she has served meals to students and families. She's helped with computer handouts, always with a smile and a great attitude. She always goes out of her way to make sure people have cards for their birthdays, and she does an all-around wonderful job of being a great person—and a great secretary. There is no job too big or unimportant for Laurie. We are blessed to have her at North."

**Elora Franklin**, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

"Elora Franklin helped develop a brand-new Life Skills classroom at Charlemagne Elementary School in the beginning of the 2019–20 school year. She had insight into student needs and brought her vision into reality as she worked closely with the classroom teacher to develop an excellent learning environment. When COVID-19 hit, Elora stepped up to the challenge of distance learning and helped develop an excellent remote learning program. If a challenge is presented, she is the first to come up with a plan to overcome it."

**Theresa Garnsey**, *Educational Assistant, Holt Elementary School*

"Theresa Garnsey is an outstanding educator retiring this year after many years of service as librarian at Holt Elementary, and Willakenzie before Holt was built. This year, when the pandemic caused the cancellation of the statewide Oregon Battle of the Books, Theresa ran a friendly competition on Zoom for students who loved and counted on OBOB. This gave them continuity that was desperately needed. And in normal years, she puts in huge amounts of extra hours arranging OBOB teams, contacting parents, and attending district, regional, and even state competitions."

**SK Gaskell**, *Lead Grounds Specialist & Integrated Pest Manager, Custodial/ Grounds*

"SK joined the district in June 2020 and quickly showed an exceptional eye for planning and execution. Her passion for landscaping, coupled with the transportation staff and our full-time grounds crew, led to the landscape being in the best shape it has been in years. This feat would have been a massive undertaking for a seasoned person in her role, but she did all of this within the first six months of hire!"

**Angie Gee**, *Human Services Coordinator, Chávez Elementary School*

"Angie is like a spirited sprite as she dashes about doing her job, changing hats as often as needed. She believes in our students and their abilities, and she offers them every chance to succeed. She has been at the forefront of Chávez Elementary for the past six years as the secretary. Angie gives selfless acts of service to the Chávez family of students and staff. Her dedication is an example of the kind of caring, kindness and dedication that helps our students succeed."

**Patricia Gehlhaar**, *School Secretary, Gilham Elementary School*

"Patricia demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to Gilham Elementary. Patricia's skills, knowledge, willingness to help others, and dedication to the school and the community make her the ideal candidate. She is a wonderful ambassador for our school in assisting students, staff and substitute teachers, and greeting visitors and guests with a smile. During this pandemic, she helps with food and school supplies distribution. She is always there."

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

"Lynne Given is the glue that holds IHS together. She has earned the students' trust, and supports them in all their learning endeavors. Even if it's a little thing, like where to store a large class project, Lynne knows about the project and encourages students to store them safely in her office until class time. Little actions like that build the trust of students. I'm so thankful that my student knows they have a safe person to go to for questions, large or small."

**Kelly Greatwood**, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"There is no curve ball thrown at Mrs. Greatwood that can make her anything less than excellent. She has been able to adapt and excel with the transition into distance learning. She is always ready to teach under any condition and expects the kids to give her their best. If a child needs a motivation system for participation or attendance, she is on it. If a student is not quite grasping a concept, she will give clear and concise feedback and an explanation that allows them to grow."

**Arthur Hart**, *Classified Benefits Coordinator, Human Resources*

"Art is an exceptional team player and communicator. He distills very complex topics and supports staff with the important work of planning for both now and the future. He is kind, articulate, and an excellent advocate. Whether it is a one-off question for clarification or a longer discussion to explore a challenge, he is admired for his dedication and availability."

**Deanne Herman**, *Educational Assistant, Twin Oaks Elementary School*

"Deanne has been a team player at Twin Oaks for many years! She is always there to help students and staff with a smile. Other staff look to her for support, and Deanne is always there to provide guidance or assistance. She goes the extra mile when working with students and has been an invaluable support to the teaching staff at Twin Oaks. She'll be missed next year!"

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

"Julie is truly the Heart of Howard. She not only sits in the center, but Julie goes out of her way to support students, staff and families in any way she can. She makes everyone feel special, wanted and deserving of her time and support. Everything she does for Howard shows us she is a superior role model for both our students and staff. Each and every day, Julie exudes a kind spirit and is a positive influence for our students and staff."

**Shiloh Jackson**, *Post-Graduate Planning Specialist, Sheldon High School*

"Shiloh brings a positive presence to Sheldon. She is always friendly to students, staff and community members. She is quick to offer help and always does so with a positive attitude. Between coaching cheerleading, running the front desk, and now taking on the career center, Shiloh has quickly become an invaluable asset to our school. She is kind, positive, a good team player, and someone our students look up to."

**Suzie Johnson**, *Title I Educational Assistant, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Suzie always has a positive attitude at work. She creates a warm and welcoming environment for the students she works with. Suzie is knowledgeable about a number of reading curriculums that have been used in the Title I classroom over the years. She continues to grow with the new curriculums that we have been trained in. Her emotional support for students seems to come naturally to her. The students enjoy coming to her group and feel a sense of safety."

**Karen Kingzett**, *School Secretary, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Karen works tirelessly on behalf of the Roosevelt Middle School community. Teachers, staff (administrators and classified) and families all reap the benefit of Karen's amazing and entirely 'unsung' efforts. She is the consummate professional. She shows up through thick and thin, placing the needs of her staff and school community above all else. Karen is unflappable and maintains a sense of restrained authority and good humor in an amazing balance, while dexterously completing every task in her path."

**Debora Kovensky**, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Debora is a big part of what makes Roosevelt a successful middle school. She's a great repository of RMS history, tradition, and culture—but also an important shaper of what Roosevelt is. She collaborates well with all staff; fosters a positive, growth mindset in the students she works with; and makes real differences in students' lives every day. Her positive energy, optimism and effectiveness cannot be overstated."

**Jake Lemasson**, *Educational Assistant, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Jake is an exemplary school employee whose grace under pressure, sense of humor, and obvious respect and feeling for all who encounter him—students, staff, administrators and families— is absolutely wonderful. His warm and welcoming attitude makes difficult situations better, and he encourages us to improve. I've been so lucky to get to know Jake better through Zoom breakout rooms. I have been so impressed with his bravery, thoughtfulness, and enthusiasm in the face of challenge and turmoil."

**Kara Mayer**, *Food Service Coordinator, Spencer Butte Middle School*

"Kara is a lunch lady extraordinaire, queen of recycling and neighborhood networker. She's worked tirelessly through the pandemic to ensure children have nutritious meals. She is also devoted to sustainability, networking with Love Food Not Waste, selecting eco-friendly recyclable packaging for meals, and volunteering monthly as a 'registered community collector' for plastic recycling through Lane County Waste Management."

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

"Sharp as a tack and on the ball, Melanie gets results. She is very helpful to the International High staff and is their advocate. Anything she can do to help she does. During the early days of the pandemic, Melanie was in the kitchen preparing food for daycare and other students. In short, Melanie is a star and sets an example of how to run things well."

**Debbie Parlette**, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Debbie is very patient and knowledgeable with computers and helped train many of us on how to teach online with Zoom. She made herself available to take calls or even participate in a Zoom to assist our training. She helped me a lot by answering questions with positive results. Debbie is a true team player."

**Stephanie Perez**, *School Secretary, Monroe Middle School*

"Stephanie started her secretary position during the pandemic and has been flexible, supportive, willing, reliable, and so much more. She is a bright light in our school and has been a game changer for our Spanish-speaking families. They feel so much more welcomed because of her presence and ability to translate and support our families. She started 'Lunch Bunch' where kids get together twice a week to chat, converse, socialize and have fun! Students feel connected and that they belong!"

**Michelle Phillip**, *User Services Specialist, Technology Department*

"Michelle Phillip is the world's greatest cheerleader, no matter what position she holds. She was first in attendance and then in scheduling while she was at Sheldon High School, and now she's hit the big time working for the whole district. I know the students miss her, but, dang, is she talented when it comes to Synergy questions and master schedules. When she worked at Sheldon High School, we often referred to her as 'Mama Michelle,' as students would hang around in flocks no matter where she resided."

**Jake Reents**, *Technology Support Specialist, Churchill High School*

"Jake deserves this award because he never complains; works diligently to solve problems; gets technology out to students; and is wise about his boundaries, while making it all work. Jake is good about communicating when to email the Synergy team versus the Tech team. He always greets staff with the utmost polite manners. He just treats people kindly, like others should treat him."

**Buffy Ritchie**, *School Secretary, Monroe Middle School*

"Buffy Ritchie has the unique ability to inspire kids and make them feel wanted and included. She has successfully created a safe, stress-free space where middle school students can fully express who they are and leave, feeling equipped to face daily challenges. Buffy finds ways to help kids discover what they are passionate about. Her positive, generous and upbeat personality is infectious."

**Bernadette Ross**, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Life Skills Network*

"Bernadette is deserving of this award because of her continued commitment to provide excellent leadership and accountability to her students year after year. She goes above and beyond to help provide support to her co-workers, students and parents. She sets a great example of providing excellent service on a consistent basis."

**Jackie Sanderson**, *Educational Assistant, Holt Elementary School*

"Jackie is the 'go-to' for anyone at Holt who has any Zoom or technology questions. She has engineered iPad stands for staff members so they can use them as document cameras during Zoom lessons with students. In addition to her invaluable assistance to staff, she continues to teach and mentor students during this difficult time. Distance learning was made so much easier and more enjoyable by Jackie's selflessness and generosity!"

**Patti Schmidt**, *Educational Assistant, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"When you visit Willagillespie's playground, you will hear, 'Miss Patti, Miss Patti, Miss Patti!' She is a rock star to every kindergarten student. Some days, she is the glue that keeps the school together because she can move around and do jobs as needed. I have often heard her telling students, 'Believe in yourself,' 'You can do it,' and 'I'm here to help.' She is a glittery force of positive energy. 4J will not be the same when she retires."

**Beth Smith**, *Behavior Support Assistant, Chávez Elementary School*

"Ms. Beth is an incredibly important person to our Chávez community. She works with students who are experiencing some of the biggest challenges to get them feel settled and be successful in their school experiences. Ms. Beth does an outstanding job of forming connections, reliably showing up as someone there to support them, seeing their strengths, and creating little plans to give students increased chances of success. Additionally, she is a pleasure for all staff to work alongside with her fantastic communication, positive demeanor and can-do attitude."

**Jackie Solares**, *Bilingual Educational Assistant, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Maestra Solares' dedication to supporting our students is demonstrated every day. She is a kind human being and professional. She is a person who walks the extra miles necessary to be sure all students' academic, emotional and social needs are met. Even on a difficult day, with her charisma and humor she brightens our comprehensive distance learning. Her solidarity with students, teachers and administrators during this school year has taught me that to be a good teacher I must be a good human being too."

**Kevin Summerfield**, *Educational Assistant, Churchill High School*

"Kevin Summerfield embodies the heart and spirit of Churchill High School. He has held many key roles in our school and, in each, he consistently places student needs above all else, supporting their voices and encouraging their leadership. As a colleague, Kevin passionately advocates for true equity in education by leading difficult conversations with vulnerability, patience, skill and grace. He brings us together and takes care of us. He is a living, breathing example of excellence in education and makes everyone around him better."

**Paige Toro**, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Howard Elementary School*

"Paige Toro is our newest teammate, bringing energy, passion and a refreshing calm presence to our very busy classroom. She is amazing at generating ideas to improve school for our students. She is a big picture thinker and can run through scenarios and identify anything we haven't thought of. This is especially helpful in a Life Skills classroom where being prepared keeps everyone safe. Her self-motivation and initiative make her a dream teammate."

**Campbell Trangmar**, *Custodian, South Eugene High School*

"It is not often and, in fact, it is rare to find a person who has the complete set of qualities like Campbell. His work ethic is superior, his attention to detail is unmatched, and he does it all with the greatest of attitudes. Truly exemplary, Campbell should be held up as the example for the district when discussing people who make a positive impact on our local communities, and at South Eugene, he is a star."

**Hayes Vertulfo**, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Monroe Middle School*

"Hayes has taken to comprehensive distance learning with a confidence and skill that I have rarely seen before in past educational assistants. He takes teaching seriously. He understands kids need humor and compassion, yet still need their content delivered to them in digestible ways. The kids love Hayes, and our entire school is better because of his commitment and talent. In this way, the community as a whole benefits through the positive young adults he sends into the world."

**Tina Williams**, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Howard Elementary School*

"Tina Williams has always been our classroom go-getter, and it was no surprise to see her tackle this last year with the same ambitious spirit. We watched her create amazing materials for at-home learning, encouraged her students' adults through Zoom, supported the ever-growing needs of her co-workers in the classroom, and stepped out of the classroom to help when others in the school had a need. She is our stability, and this year would not have run so smoothly without her."

**Audrey Wiltz**, *Educational Assistant, Madison Middle School*

"Audrey Wiltz is one of the longest standing members of the Madison staff, and she is very much the glue that holds everyone together. She encourages students to succeed by truly getting to know them, by believing in them, and also by holding them accountable to achieve great things! She encourages students to enjoy their learning by having fun with them and offering a wry sense of humor that our middle schoolers respond to really well. She's a 'Jill of all trades' and beloved by all!"

**Rose Winand**, *Technology Support Specialist, South Eugene High School*

"Every year, and particularly in this pandemic year, Rose's efforts have been key to connecting students to education. Her problem-solving, diligence, organization and skill help make the world go round at South. In the face of intense logistical challenges, ongoing and ever-changing needs and stressful circumstances, Rose brings a sense of humor, 'can do' attitude, and desire to help that soothes the anxious, provides access to the disconnected, and makes the seemingly impossible possible."

**Cindy Winkle**, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Howard Elementary School*

"Cindy is efficient, kind and easy to collaborate with. She allows her students to be who they are and meets them wherever that is. She utilizes their strengths and help them overcome their weaknesses. Her outlook on education is all about doing what is right for the individual child. She models this during all routines throughout each day. This perspective has brought a lot of growth to our students and sets them up for success."

**Vickie Woolman**, *School Secretary, Twin Oaks Elementary School*

"Vickie has been a fixture at Twin Oaks Elementary for as long as anyone can remember. Over 35 years of service is quite a testament to her commitment to our community. In so many ways, she is the embodiment of our school spirit: a little bit of country mixed with a dash of humor; a big, generous heart; a welcoming smile; and an easy-going, down-home practicality that comes in handy when a job needs to get done. Twin Oaks will not be the same when she retires this summer."

**Pilar Zentz**, *Bilingual Educational Assistant, River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School*

"Pilar has created a fun, engaging and meaningful BEST afterschool program for the academically struggling students of El Camino del Río/River Road Elementary School. Her attention to detail and follow through ensures that students and staff are making the most of their time together. Their scores in all academic areas, including English language for our non-native English speakers, are significantly improved when compared to students who are not in the BEST afterschool program. This has been a powerful program for our most high-risk students, and Pilar is the reason why it has been successful for so many years."

## Teachers & Licensed Specialists

**Lisa Albrich**, *Spanish Teacher, Sheldon High School*

"Lisa is the highest quality of educator there is. She is the reason I became an educator, and I know I am not the only one. The quality of education she provides for her students is unparalleled and something I strive to achieve in my own classroom. She is a model not only for her fellow educators as to what high quality education looks like, but also for her students on what it means to be a good person."

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

"Ashley Sensei, what she is called at Yujin Gakuen, is a dynamic and energetic teacher. She always explains the assignment at hand clearly and with examples. Ashley Sensei answers any and all questions with respect for each child who is asking. As a former teacher myself, I have not witnessed a teacher so positive and clear with their students. Ashley stands out among teachers I have been in contact with."

**Lee Baker**, *Counselor, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Lee performs the diverse and challenging responsibilities of a school counselor extremely well. He is highly competent, professional and responsible. His interpersonal skills and interactions with students, families and staff are excellent. When engaging with students, Lee is calm, measured and reassuring. Lee is both a school counselor and a school leader. He works diligently in support of student success."

**Meredith Baker**, Kindergarten/First Grade Teacher, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School

"Meredith Baker is an all-star teacher. During comprehensive distance learning, she has offered her students a rigorous online classroom setting where students know what to expect each day and are held to a high academic standard. Meredith is also very warm and caring with her students, and they feel cared for and respected. Meredith has been at Buena Vista for many years, and is a key staff member to the ongoing success of the Spanish immersion program. Her ideas and input are invaluable!"

**Leah Barber**, Language Arts Teacher, Sheldon High School

"Ms. B has encouraged me so many times that I can complete high school and that I am smart enough to push through any obstacles I may encounter. She makes sure to make her classroom into a safe place to communicate with her and the other students. She takes her work very seriously. Her classes are full of laughter and are also serious but enjoyable. I learned so much from her, not just about school but also about life past school."

**Jeff Billington**, Fourth Grade Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School

"Jeff is one of the most patient and caring teachers I have ever worked with. He takes the time to see what every student needs, individually and collectively. He comes to work every day with a smile and an encouraging word for others. Not only is he an amazing teacher who encourages the best of everyone around him, he serves in the military reserves. Somehow he makes doing it all look easy. It's teachers like Jeff that make me want to come to work every day and keep coming back every year."

**Kelly Bokn**, Athletic Director, Churchill High School

"Kelly Bokn is a phenomenal athletic administrator. He is organized and authentic. He cares deeply for our coaching staff and all of our kids. He has led our school back to athletics through the COVID pandemic with great purpose and care, and has counseled numerous athletes and coaches during the mental health struggles that have accompanied COVID. Churchill has a supportive family atmosphere, and Kelly Bokn is a huge reason for that positive culture."

**Kelli Boom**, Physical Education Teacher, Monroe Middle School

"Over and over, we're hearing from families that students love her classes. She allows for independent work, group work, and prepares fun and relevant activities both in health and team sports. Ms. Boom is the true definition of a team player. She collaborates with colleagues and then follows up each and every time. Through all of this, she is gracious, kind, patient, caring and considerate. Not only is she this way with the staff, she is

even more so with her students!"

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

"Carissa does an incredible amount of work in order to help the school run smoothly. She works an incredible amount, always making student-centered choices. She also communicates quickly, regularly and with respect, and treats co-workers as she would like to be treated. She is always available to help and has a calm and reassuring presence."

**Brenda Brainard**, *Director, NATIVES Program*

"Brenda has been instrumental in the cultural education of both native and non-native 4J students for nearly 30 years. Her classroom presentations, which she does hundreds of a year, support not only our native students, but bring important cultural understanding to our non-native students. Her years of service have provided a pathway for the district to continue the strong foundation that she created as it prepares to implement SB13-Tribal History/Shared History curriculum. She has been unwavering in her dedication to families, delivering meals and food boxes to native families in need throughout this pandemic. Brenda has dedicated her life to making the native voice heard in the district and helping all native students succeed in life, starting as infants and growing into strong and healthy Native adults."

**Paul Brisentine**, *Math Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Paul has not just gone an extra step this year. It is clear he has gone an extra marathon. Both my husband and I are in awe of his dedication to teaching and to his endless support of every student with remote schooling. Our kids faced many challenges this past year, but with a teacher like Paul, they were confident to embrace the change — and even 'make the most of it.' I would like Paul to be recognized for his dedication and creativity to both teaching and supporting the students."

**Nikita Brougner**, *Kindergarten Teacher, River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School*

"Maestra Brougner successfully engages her students in every lesson, learning activity, art project, breakout room—you name it, and she does it for the full four hours. My daughter is learning Spanish, how to read, all her numbers, and she is having fun. She can't wait to share what she learned that day at the dinner table at night! I think Maestra Brougner has done an extraordinary job with distance learning. I can't wait for my daughter to meet her in person."

**Lupe Callihan**, *Fifth Grade Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Lupe is the epitome of a stellar educator. Hardworking doesn't come close to describing her! Throughout the last year, Lupe has taken the constant changes of comprehensive distance learning in stride. During this time, she has continued to make sure that each and every one of her students are held to the same high standards as when they are learning in the building. She will not quit until she knows she has done everything possible for her students to be the best humans they can be."

**Rachel Cannon**, *Special Education Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"Mrs. Cannon has been a huge asset for our special education students and families at Monroe Middle School. She partners with classroom teachers to align her curriculum to support what her students are learning in the classroom and teaches her students to high standards. I appreciate Mrs. Cannon always advocating for her students, working with staff to ensure best practices, and reminding staff of district policies and practices to ensure her students succeed."

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

"Sheryl has been a dedicated member of Eugene School District 4J for many years and continues every day to strive to improve herself and her knowledge to support and guide the students she teaches. It is teachers like Sheryl who make imprints on our students' lives. For students who might otherwise give up on themselves, Sheryl is there to show them that not only does she believe in them, the world does as well."

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

"Mr. Catlin went out of his way to make for an easier time for me, as I journey through my senior year struggles. Mr. Catlin has made me feel normal and like graduation is even a possibility. He is an amazing teacher, deserving of this award. Not remotely do I think he will get the praise and attention he deserves, but I believe he will use the award to further help the career paths and graduation opportunities of struggling students."

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

"Ms. Charpie is the best teacher I have ever met in my life. I have never met a teacher who is so kind, caring, compassionate and truly cares and likes the children she is teaching. My son loves her with all his heart and enjoys seeing her every day. She goes above and beyond the call of duty. She is an angel not only to the children, but to the parents as well."

**Meredith Coelho**, *Language Arts Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Meredith has been a language arts teacher, an AVID teacher, a social studies teacher, an elective course teacher, and our librarian. Although her changing role at our school has created extra workload, she always sees new opportunities as learning experiences. I have been enormously impressed by Meredith's positive attitude, her instructional excellence and her commitment to students and the community."

**Linda Coombs**, *Speech-Language Pathologist, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

"Linda has taken a child struggling to communicate, and helped them gain independence, self-esteem and knowledge. She has identified gaps in knowledge and comprehension that caused a debilitating effect on my child. Her thorough, systematic teaching approach and welcoming personality has made a profound impact on my child's academic success."

**Seth Cooper**, *Spanish Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Seth Cooper makes kids feel seen, which is so important during this school year. He knows how to talk to middle schoolers, which is no easy feat! You can tell he really enjoys his work, and he is having fun doing his job when you watch him with students. My family is so thankful for his work and kindness."

**Kelley Coplin**, *American Sign Language Teacher, North Eugene High School*

"This pandemic has hit all our teachers hard, and I have witnessed firsthand the challenges Kelley has faced as not only a teacher, but a sign language interpreter in our community. Kelley is always adjusting, standing up for her students, and never ever making someone feel unwelcome in her presence. She brings a laugh like no other, the caring hand of a mother, and the real stories students need to feel loved and supported."

**Annette Corbeau**, *First Grade Teacher, Gilham Elementary School*

"During an incredibly unique and sometimes difficult year, Mrs. Corbeau has been a shining light for all of her first graders. Mrs. Corbeau is an amazing and talented educator who builds incredible relationships with her students, which allow her to get the most out of them each and every day. She maintains high expectations for all her students while recognizing and celebrating each of them for the individuals they are. We are so thankful for Mrs. Corbeau. She is the best!"

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

"Patrice has gone above and beyond with excellent communication and support during distance learning. I have a child who learns at a different rate than his peers and in order to keep him challenged and engaged Patrice has consistently come up with strategies to give him the same opportunities to grow. She has been readily available to conference late into the evening when needed and always has a story to relate to my kiddo's anxieties. We can always feel those hugs right through the screen."

**Vanessa Crane**, *First Grade Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Mrs. Crane works hard to make sure every child is not only successful, but growing at an appropriate rate. Her math instruction is structured in a way that is accessible if a student is still learning the skill and can expand to more in-depth for students who have mastered the skill. She tailors writing instruction in the same way, making sure the needs of all students are met, regardless of their starting ability. She is patient, understanding, and works hard to build relationships despite all the technology barriers we currently grapple with."

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

"Mrs. Brown, day in and day out, brought her A game to Zoom. It amazed us as parents how she was able to keep the energy level so high for that many hours a day over Zoom, while still making the learning exciting and pure joy for the first graders. Her first graders just fed off of her energy—thirsty to learn, and feeling proud and excited with Mrs. Brown guiding them and cheering them along the way."

**Judy Davies**, *Second Grade Teacher, McCornack Elementary School*

"Judy Davies is an exceptional teacher and person all-around. She has a magical way of getting kids to actually love and want to learn. She is positive, intelligent, funny and compassionate, amongst many other qualities that she possesses. My daughter learned so much from and with her; it's unbelievable. Judy Davies is a fantastic human being, and for my child and me, she already has an award—an award in our heart for everything she has done for both of us and all her other students."

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

"Kim is diligent, dedicated and devoted to helping her students reach their potential. She creates interesting lessons, even over Zoom, keeping students engaged and progressing. She recently wrote a grant so her students would have a lovely break space when they returned to hybrid learning. Her first thoughts are always for the well-being of the children."

**Elena Delgado Vazquez**, *Spanish Teacher, Sheldon High School*

"Ms. Elena Delgado Vazquez always has a positive, understanding energy. She gets her students to participate in class when other classes are struggling to do the same. She always asks her students to come to office hours if they need help. She is the host of the Black Student Union club and always makes us feel good in class by asking each and every one of us how our week or weekend was, and what we are most looking forward to doing for the rest of the week."

**Sarah Donn**, *Second Grade Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Sarah has blossomed into a powerful teacher. She knows that building relationships with her class is the most important part of teaching. Her classroom community is special and dear to her. Her knowledge as a reading specialist makes her a natural interventionist with her students. She focuses on student interests and builds self-efficacy as they grow in the safety of her class. With students at the center of her planning, she is all about engaging them because she knows students learn more when they are active participants."

**Brynne Eidlin**, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Camas Ridge Elementary School*

"Brynne has not only been a great teacher for my son, but also a thoughtful friend to our family. She regularly checks in on our family to make sure we are doing well and able to keep up with the school work at home. This has been a challenging year, and no matter what is thrown at Brynne, she handles it in stride and with gratitude. Brynne is a rock star of a teacher, friend and parent. Her students are seen, heard and valued."

**Anna Elias**, *Life Skills Teacher, Adams Elementary School*

"During this pandemic school year, I have watched Anna pivot with more grace than any ballerina. She has managed to keep both the needs of her students and the needs of her educational assistants in mind as she juggles schedules and resources. She has continuously found ways to help her students connect under less-than-ideal circumstances. This year has been a bigger challenge than anyone could have imagined, and Anna has not only risen to the occasion, but managed to shine impressively during this time."

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

"Dene Eller is a truly dedicated and passionate educator, as well as community member. I was fortunate to meet her through my daughter's school where I volunteered. She is always coming up with new and creative ways to inspire and teach her students about the importance of staying healthy, as well as staying positive and kind!"

**Christie Enders**, *Counselor, Sheldon High School*

"Christie can keep a cool-yet-empathetic head while helping students through many life struggles. An example of her charitable spirit was when she helped jumpstart the holiday season with a food and gift card drive that benefited hundreds of students. She organized a massive can drive to raise money for gifts, clothes and food. Not one to seek the spotlight, she sees a need and beelines toward meeting it. When it comes to passion and advocacy for students, she's at the top of the list."

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

"Jason guides students to succeed with every action throughout his day. He demonstrates broad knowledge of instructional practices by leading collaborative work around implementing the newly adopted social studies standards to build a program with integrity, enthusiasm and continuity. He encourages students to enjoy their learning every day, AND THEY DO! Mr. Erickson makes his class, whether in person or online, a lively and rewarding adventure, filled with wigs, character voices, music and thoughtful connections between historical context and current day relevance."

**Iris Essman**, *Learning Specialist, ECCO*

"With a quiet wit, charm and smarts unlike any other, Iris is truly one in a million. Her work at ECCO is impeccable, quirky and always given with a smile. She bends over backwards for those in need as a silent force for ECCO's brilliant students with disabilities. Not only does she do this for kids, but she is thoughtful and consistently, unselfishly supportive with staff."

**Erin Fuller**, *Kindergarten Teacher, Adams Elementary School*

"Mrs. Fuller is a strong advocate for students' needs. This year she advocated for the social and emotional needs of our youngest students by implementing small social groups via her kindergarten Zoom class. Mrs. Fuller shows exemplary leadership skills and takes on increasingly challenging tasks for the betterment of the Adams staff and community. Her analytical approach to solving complex problems allows her to seamlessly orchestrate schedules and complete tasks with detailed precision."

**Kristen Gianforti**, *Counselor, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Mrs. G is the rock of Awbrey Park. Staff, students and parents all rely on her, and she is always there when we need her. She selflessly supports us with a warm smile and a caring heart. I cannot imagine how much harder this past year would have been without our amazing Mrs. G. She has been the anchor holding our Awbrey Park community together. We love you, Mrs. G.!"

**Kendra Groves**, *Second Grade Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Ms. Kendra is a brand-new teacher who has been an amazing support during this difficult year. She has risen to the challenge in every way. She has supported her classroom mentally and emotionally with grace and extraordinary wit. She has championed for her students, making learning fun during this difficult time; facilitated student connections while not being physically together; and supported each individual in their learning needs. She is an inspiration in navigating learning amidst constant transition."

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

"This teacher helped me achieve an A in his class every trimester and has helped many other students. I was having a really hard time in history class for the first few weeks, but he offered for me to come in early or stay late virtually so he could help me learn more and find ways to make it easier for me. He is always there if you need him. He is respectful, kind and reassuring."

**Joshua Hamill**, *Social Studies Teacher, Eugene International High School at Sheldon*

"For close to three decades Joshua Hamill has been the heart and soul of the Spanish Immersion Program at the Eugene International High School at Sheldon. Every Spanish immersion student who has graduated from the program since its inception in the 1990s has had the honor and pleasure of learning from an educator who not only creates a dynamic and memorable learning experience in his classroom each day, but who also cares deeply about each and every student. ¡Viva Hamill!"

**Katie Hansen**, *Transition Education Network Special Education Teacher, Sheldon High School*

"Katie is deserving of this award because of her continued commitment to provide excellent leadership and accountability to her students year after year. She goes above and beyond to help provide support to her co-workers, students and parents. She sets a great example of providing excellent service on a consistent basis."

**Aimee Harrington**, *Language Arts Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Aimee Harrington is an exceptional Language Arts teacher, helping inspire both critical thinking and a love of literature among her students. In a time when it is easy for students to stay anonymous and unseen behind a blank screen at home, it is an exceptional thing to see your child be seen, known, valued and supported for who they are. I am grateful to Ms. Harrington for seeing my child, honoring and supporting her as an individual, and caring enough to go the extra mile."

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

"Mr. Havner excels when he is with his students. He sounds like a YouTube star with thousands of followers all tuning into his education blog. He leads his students through English and math with humor and an honest passion for learning. It only takes a minute of listening to him to know he is a master educator. His positivity is contagious. Instead of this year being a trial, we have seen our fourth grader engaged and happy to attend online learning."

**Carisa Henniger**, *Second Grade Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Mrs. Henniger sees the potential in each student and has this incredible way of drawing it out of them. She knows when to push and when to nurture. My kids will forever be blessed with the attributes she allowed to flourish in her classroom, and I am certain the same can be said of all of her students. If only we could all have a Mrs. Henniger to guide us in our journey. She is one of a kind!"

**Ann Hettick**, *Health Teacher, Sheldon High School*

"During this unprecedented and challenging school year, Ann has demonstrated once again how deeply she cares for her students and addresses their needs with understanding and compassion. Ann checks all the boxes for educators who go above and beyond for their students. She's innovative, creative, inclusive and committed to their good health, which has been especially appreciated during the pandemic."

**Mark Hewitt**, *Math Teacher, Eugene Online Academy*

"Mark is an outstanding instructional leader and team player. Mark's extensive experience working in asynchronous online K-12 education has proven to be an invaluable asset to Eugene Online Academy. Mark collaborated with all the other members of the middle school team to develop orientation sessions that help students get off on the right foot when they came to EOA. Mark projects 'can-do' attitude with a hefty dose of 'How can I help?'"

**Theresa Hilkey**, *Math Teacher, ECCO*

"Theresa always puts students first—engaging and teaching them a difficult subject. Math is not easy for several of her students. She mentors staff and other new 4J teachers who she doesn't even work with in the building. She also provides daily inspiration for her colleagues. She is present and an open ear for anyone who comes across her path. Theresa is known as 'Boss' at ECCO because she is a fantastic communicator and articulates the needs of our kids every single day."

***Darla Humbert, Counselor, Holt Elementary School***

"Darla is patient, kind and willing to take on any amount of work for the benefit of her students. Time and time again, she is able to elevate students and advocate for their mental and academic well-being. So many students seek her out for guidance and comfort. She is also a resource for teachers who need assistance in their classrooms with student behaviors. She is able to navigate difficult situations with grace and a sense of humor."

***Sandi Jacobson, Second Grade Teacher, Gilham Elementary School***

"In a year like this, my daughter has often felt lonely, anxious or confused. Every day she walks out of class, she leaves knowing she is smart, important and cared for. While the actual education is very important, I find it incredibly reassuring that Sandi Jacobson is not only our child's teacher, but also a partner in her life."

***Tory Jenkins, Kindergarten Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School***

"Tory, or Mr. T, is calm under pressure, adaptable to any situation, and truly loves teaching five- and six-year-olds. He has fresh new ideas each year, making the love of learning the most important thing in kindergarten. He has an ability to make his class a family where students care about each other and are willing to work together for a common cause. Standing 6' 4" tall, Mr. T doesn't have the appearance of a typical kindergarten teacher, but he has the soul of a gentle giant."

***Chris Johnson, Science Teacher, Monroe Middle School***

"Although Mr. Johnson loves science, he loves kids more. He loves helping kids feel successful, helping kids believe in themselves, and helping kids find and enjoy the wonders of the world. His 'goofball' methods and tactics are engaging, fun, and turn kids on to learning. He is consistently praised for being kids' favorite teacher and continually gets shoutouts from both students and families. He has thrived during comprehensive distance learning and has continually found new ways to keep Zoom engaging and fun for his students."

***Stephen Johnson, Music Teacher, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School***

"Stephen is funny, engaging, supportive and creative, to name just a few of the attributes that demonstrate his passion for teaching children the gift of music. He is patient with frustrated students, encouraging with disconnected students (due to the screens), joyful with students who are sharing their music homework creations, and inventive with the tools he's incorporated into comprehensive distant learning. His presence is felt throughout the day, and he is one of the reasons we feel Buena Vista has been able to maintain a sense of community throughout remote instruction."

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

"Sara always goes above and beyond to provide meaningful lessons for students, and she willingly shares best practices with our team while collaborating and planning. Sara's experience and expertise is invaluable. As a new teacher, I appreciate and respect her ability to communicate her methods and ideas in a way that is practical and thoughtful. Her love for the profession and care for her students inspires me! Sara is a generous team player who puts students and families first."

**Tessa Karbum**, *Science Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Tessa has worked very hard to help support her colleagues and students during this difficult time. She has really taken this year as an opportunity to learn and try new things. She has been the first one on our staff to try new ideas and then acts as the support for the building when other staff want to try them too. She has tried many new techniques this year to promote engagement and support student learning."

**Jenny Kneale**, *Fifth Grade Teacher, Willigillespie Elementary School*

"Jenny is amazing. She is willing to speak to me about the individual goals for my child this school year. She is very patient, helpful and is always available for my student when they need assistance or further explanation. She is a great teacher."

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

"Allison has created tons of Seesaw lessons and Google slides to support third grade students and teachers across the district, especially in reading. She created a drive where all third grade teachers could share resources and share the heavy load that this year has put on our shoulders. There are many teachers that use her lessons daily and for that we owe her at least some recognition. She made teaching online easier and better for so many."

**Mary Kuhl**, *Fourth Grade Teacher, McCornack Elementary School*

"Mary's genuine, professional and passionate approach has enabled the development of a positive rapport with her students, staff, community members and parents. She is a person who embraces and celebrates diversity and the richness that each individual student, staff and family member brings to a school community. Mary is an incredible listener who forms deep and sincere connections with those around her, and she is always looking for a way to help individuals and our community."

**Kori Kunz**, *Media Specialist, Sheldon High School*

"Kori goes the extra mile to make everyone feel included and she opens the doors to new topics and opportunities for self-learning, which has been critical and greatly appreciated, especially during COVID-19. She is pleasant, lovely and a bright star in the professional world. Students speak highly of her in the hallways, and they obviously feel confident about themselves and their core identities after interacting with Kori as a teacher."

**Yvette Landrum**, *Special Education Teacher, Eugene Online Academy*

"Yvette Landrum makes the effort to offer support to every teacher at Eugene Online Academy. Her consistently positive and calm approach, along with her interest and willingness to support any student and any teacher at EOA elementary level, has contributed to the success of this 4J program. Her generosity contributes to the positive spirit of our school. Yvette is a natural team player, which has meant so much during this challenging school year."

**Michael Leahy**, *Counselor, South Eugene High School*

"Bottom line is that students achieve success when they work with Michael. Michael finds what success looks like for each individual student and helps them achieve their goal. He responds extremely fast with other staff, students and parents. I have heard many times from my students that having Michael in their corner is a huge relief. They feel like they are heard, understood, and have an advocate."

**Rebecca Leduc**, *Kindergarten Teacher, Edgewood Elementary School*

"Ms. Becky is an enthusiastic and encouraging kindergarten teacher. Since my son joined in September 2020, he has only experienced her classroom online. Rebecca makes it look as though she has been teaching via Zoom for years. She makes learning fun and interesting, and makes an effort to ensure every child feels welcome and heard. She is a great communicator, whether I have a more involved question or a quick check on something. She is a champion of education and the community."

**Julie Lehl**, *Health Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Teaching health in the middle of a worldwide pandemic online to students who have very different feelings concerning their health and safety is no small task. However, Julie seamlessly presents incredibly hard topics in informative ways while maintaining professionalism and supporting a broad range of students simultaneously. Through it all, we can see how genuine she is in her promotion of health and community in one of the hardest times in our world's history."

**Debbie Levy**, *Media Specialist, Churchill High School*

"Debbie Levy is a teacher-librarian extraordinaire! Her library is a warm, welcoming place with a diverse collection of reading materials. Students can see themselves in these books, as well as experience cultures and people from around the world. Debbie gets to know her students' interests and is able to connect them to books they love and keep them coming back for more. She is a future-ready librarian, leading in technology integration, information literacy, digital citizenship, and reading advocacy. She inspires greatness amongst her peers and leads with grace, compassion and integrity."

**Marlee Litten**, *Teacher on Special Assignment, Student Services Department*

"Marlee is truly the glue that holds departments and initiatives together. Few people hold the institutional knowledge and can work to build bridges like she has done and continues to do for 4J. She is the linchpin of many interconnected initiatives and brings incredible value to our system as the bridge between related, but often disconnected, ideas. She has earned the trust of everyone she works with, and she always brings a calming perspective to the work environment, regardless of the size and scope of the task at hand."

**Mariko Maddock**, *Fifth Grade Teacher, Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion Elementary School*

"Teaching during a global pandemic is hard, but teaching Japanese during a global pandemic is even more challenging! We are thankful Mariko was able to create fun and engaging assignments that stretched and challenged our students. The weekly topics were enticing and promoted such amazing knowledge expansion for our students. The assignments were so well drafted that I may have been equally enticed to learn alongside my student!"

**Karen Marashi**, *Math Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Karen is a great teacher. She is super nice, and I love having her for homeroom. Even when I'm having a bad day, I go to homeroom and she is so happy. She always has a smile and that makes me feel better! She is very passionate about her teaching and you can tell she loves her job. She cares for her students and always wants the best for them."

**Paula McCown**, *Special Education Teacher, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

"Paula bravely took on a new challenge, and her students grew because of her dedication that went well beyond expectations. She embodied her motto of 'Brave Life 2020.' Paula is an excellent Life Skills teacher and deserves being recognized for her leadership and compassion. Our students are certainly blessed to be in her program. I am blessed to work in her classroom. I would be honored to have a child learn under Paula's kindness and teaching skills."

**Kelly McGhehey**, *Counselor, ECCO*

"Kelly is central to ECCO. She works with staff and students daily to ensure success. She communicates and problem-solves with all involved at ECCO. She doesn't just talk the walk; she acts with her compassionate, understanding heart. Her wit and honesty paired with pure leadership is absolutely fantastic. Kelly is a shining star for all around her, and she deserves recognition because of her unprecedented caring, equitable soul for all humans in education."

**Chris Michael**, *Science Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Chris is super nice and loves teaching, making learning fun for all of his students. He helps you understand your work when you don't understand it. I couldn't figure out what to do first in one particular assignment, and he provide careful guidance for not only myself but my entire group until we figured it out. He is a terrific teacher and an understanding person."

**Jennifer Mora**, *Language Arts Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Jenny is an incredibly thoughtful and devoted teacher. She has always strived for better, more engaging ways to make her students love reading, writing, poetry and art. She brings out the creativity in her students and enables them to make deep connections to concepts and materials. Jenny teaches students to strive for their very best and to be open to new ideas, methods and possibilities. The results always inspire and impress me."

**Cindy Munyon**, *Speech Specialist, Student Services Department*

"Cindy not only makes suggestions about how the Transition Education Network staff can help students, but she herself will come and participate in or observe in classes so she can help in the classroom, as well as gain a stronger sense of how she can help during speech sessions. She meets students where they are and embraces who they are to develop their language skills and foster their sense of belonging and personal growth."

**Polly Nelson**, *Special Education Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Polly is the perfect example of a caring and informed educator. She leads multiple educational assistants within Pathfinder and treats all staff and students with respect. She shows a dedication to providing each of the students that she works with individualized attention and care. I have worked across this district as an educational assistant, and Polly is really the best of the best; she is an asset to 4J and deserves to be acknowledged for her leadership, commitment, knowledge, patience and expertise."

**Jamie Nicholzen-Tait**, *Fifth Grade Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Jamie has done an amazing job of supporting her students during this unprecedented school year. She has adapted her usual curriculum to meet the needs of online learning. She has continued to work to foster school spirit and friendships among students. She loves Awbrey Park and inspires her students to do the same. She also encourages greater community involvement by bridging the gap between elementary, middle and high school in the North Eugene area."

**Jackie Owens**, *Ninth Grade Transition Coordinator, Sheldon High School*

"Jackie's love for kids, support for families, and concern for our low-income students has changed not only the staff, but our community. She continues to work hard to break down barriers for students of color as well as those from low-income households. She is always setting up translators for events, scheduling events at times when parents are available, and making herself available on the weekends for parents who work two or more jobs during the week. Her selflessness is a blessing to the Sheldon community."

**Clara Palacios**, *Kindergarten Teacher, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Maestra Palacios is a teacher who is always looking for ways to help out. She enjoys working with peers who are passionate about education. She is constantly looking for ways to make her lessons interactive and interesting, especially when teaching in Spanish. When the pandemic started, she was willing to teach her team things she was learning on the new educational platforms being used. She has brought a wealth of knowledge to our community and has made a difference at Buena Vista."

**Amy Petty**, *Third Grade Teacher, McCornack Elementary School*

"Miss Petty has adapted to the virtual classroom in such a creative and effective manner. She puts the kids first and goes above and beyond to meet their individual needs, even when the world of COVID-19 spirals around us. She is the first teacher my student wanted to get a gift for when she noticed a Christmas ornament that said something along the lines of 'the guidance of a caring teacher can never be replaced.' I really could not agree more."

**Laura Points**, *Second Grade Teacher, Gilham Elementary School*

"Like many parents, I was worried when it was announced the year would start with distance learning. My concerns were immediately removed when I listened in on my kid's first day. Mrs. Points is an exceptional teacher who is passionate about her job and her students. She is a master at differentiating lessons for the variety of learners. She approached distance learning with confidence, providing variety in her delivery each day."

**Sofie Prideaux**, Kindergarten Teacher, Edgewood Elementary School

"When the school year started, I was a little worried about how hard it was going to be to teach my daughter to read through distance learning. She knew the letter sounds for some letters. But now she is sounding out words and doing a great job reading! I don't know how Ms. Sofie managed to accomplish this other than having enough years of teaching to know what does and doesn't work with kids, a massive dose of patience, and a great deal of creativity."

**Sarah Quinn**, Special Education Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School

"Sarah is a great educator. She is great with the kids in every way, kind to staff, and works well with everyone. She makes school fun for the kids while still creating a robust learning environment—going above and beyond for everyone. She keeps the work environment enjoyable while still getting down to business! She a great addition to the 4J team."

**Mary Recker**, First Grade Teacher, Gilham Elementary School

"Ms. Recker has gone above and beyond engaging first graders through what has been an extremely uncertain year. She takes the time to get to know all the kids and encourages each of them to stay engaged even through distance learning. Ms. Recker has put so much energy into ensuring that all the children in her class are able to form friendships even though most have never met in person."

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

"For years, Venus has been a solid member of the 4J special education staff—running extended school year programs in the summer months and mentoring others while teaching during the 'normal' school year. She is such a joyful, inspiring and dedicated educator—a 'deducator,' if you will! She encourages and motivates students and their families, even during these trying times. She mentors new and veteran teachers with joy and professionalism."

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

"Ashley is consistently going above and beyond. She runs the student council meetings, helps with online school assemblies, helps get donations for the school, welcomes new teachers with a warm smile and all the resources she can. On top of all of this, she is a joy. She always puts her students first and is a whiz at technology in the classroom, as well as collaborating with others with gusto!"

**Rebecca Robinson**, *Fifth Grade Teacher, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

"Madame Robinson is new to Charlemagne and new to fifth grade this year, but you would never know it because of the phenomenal job she is doing. She is such a positive presence —she radiates joy and enthusiasm—and she shows a genuine interest in her students' lives. She treats her students with respect and compassion, while making learning—even remote learning!—fun. She truly cares about her students and wants each one to succeed."

**Suzy Rock**, *Fifth Grade Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Mrs. Rock has been instrumental in the success of fifth grade online schooling this past year. She has created an environment where kids feel comfortable and supported, where they can come to learn and not be concerned about outside influences. She teaches with humor and grace, and patience and kindness, all while maintaining order."

**Beth Saxon**, *Second Grade Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Beth is deserving of recognition because of the dedication she has invested over the years in 4J. Nothing stands in the way of Beth serving, often at the sacrifice of her own personal time, because she believes in her mission to empower students to learn. Students can't wait to be second graders because they know Mrs. Saxon is an excellent teacher. Her dedication to equity and making sure all students have what they need sets a shining example to everyone around her."

**Julie Schneider**, *Kindergarten Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Julie Schneider has made online learning for my daughter's first year a joyous thing. Though she is taught through a screen, my daughter is so excited every morning for class and feels very connected to her teacher. During a drive-by parade, my daughter was so elated to see her teacher in real life. What brought me even more joy was how Ms. Schneider reacted when she noticed my daughter. It made my daughter feel incredibly special and loved by this woman who she's only met in person once."

**Yoshiko Shioya**, *Japanese Teacher, Sheldon High School*

"Yoshiko Shioya genuinely cares about her students' success, and strives to make every single one of her students feel like they can succeed. Her broad understanding of both Japanese and English allows her to explain and teach Japanese in a way that students can understand, and in a way that captures their attention. Her class is a joyous one from the moment you walk through the door to the moment you graduate. She is truly unforgettable."

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

"Ashley has worked tirelessly this year in the comprehensive distance learning model. She spends a great deal of time with students explaining assignments and showing them unconditional love. She has a beautiful light and energy about her when with her students. Despite the additional stress this year, she has maintained her commitment to her students and their well-being. She has also been very encouraging to me as a new staff member, always expressing appreciation and joy for my presence."

**Barbara Siemens**, *Language Arts Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Barbara has been THE leader during this pandemic. She is creative and does a great job engaging students. She was the Canvas leader for our building, supporting all teachers and staff, as well as all our students. As we head into hybrid learning, she continues to be supportive to our administration and staff at resolving complex issues related to safely returning to the building. During these stressful times, Barbara has been a stable and consistent support for all the staff and students."

**Erin Skoubo**, *Kindergarten Teacher, River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School*

"As a bilingual kindergarten teacher, Erin sets the tone for her students in establishing the beginnings of language development, emotional support and school expectations. It has been a marvel to see how she weaves these aspects of education into her classes every day and touches base with each of her students to make sure they are growing both in their understanding and their emotional development."

**Levi Smucker**, *Math Teacher, Spencer Butte Middle School*

"Levi is a kind, caring and thoughtful teacher whose impressive array of tools and boundless enthusiasm and thoughtfulness have been a beacon in the middle of a tough pandemic year. While I can't wait for my kids to (safely) go back to school in person, it has been a privilege to have been a fly on the wall for his remarkable teaching of sixth grade math. His work is nothing short of awe-inspiring at a time when we would all have been satisfied with average."

**Antje Snawder**, *Kindergarten Teacher, Adams Elementary School*

"Ms. Antje has gone above and beyond to meet the needs of the incoming kindergarten class despite the pandemic. Her classroom, although remote, exudes love and acceptance. Ms. Antje strives to spotlight the talents of each student and summons the collective togetherness needed to conquer any individual struggles. She has fostered a bond among the students and families that has helped us transition from remote to hybrid learning."

**Chris Stewart**, *Language Arts Teacher, Churchill High School*

"Chris embodies the spirit of professionalism and camaraderie at Churchill. He went to Churchill as a student, then came back as a student-teacher, and now has taught English there for the last 20 years. He is someone who is always willing to take on new challenges or try a new approach to teaching. He is the quintessential unsung hero. He works under the radar to consistently inspire and support students, to always work as a crucial member of the team, and to lead by his calm and consistent example."

**Katie Stiles**, *Teacher on Special Assignment, Instructional Services Department*

"Katie is an amazing communicator, supporter, cheerleader and mentor. As a first-year teacher, this year has brought many challenges, and Katie has been there with a shoulder to lean on and an ear to listen. Not only does she meet with me regularly and flexibly to address my questions and concerns, she is diligently on the lookout for resources, webinars, books and other teachers to connect me with. Her mentorship this year has been invaluable to me and my students, and I am forever grateful for her professionalism and kindness!"

**Kristin Stone**, *Math Teacher, Eugene Education Options*

"Kristin manages all the digital platforms and data for a program that relies heavily on our online capabilities. She is the co-host of our College and Career Club, which helps our graduates find work, access financial aid and apply for community college admission. Most importantly, she empowers students to let go of the school trauma they've experienced, re-examine themselves as learners, and move into their young adult lives with a sense of accomplishment and hope."

**Kelly Stroh**, *Fifth Grade Teacher, Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion Elementary School*

"Like an actor on a stage, Kelly was able to break through that fourth wall in Zoom. She engaged students and parents via creative assignments and literary readings. My daughter and I both very much enjoyed the weekly reading of the 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,' which ultimately culminated in a viewing of the movie and stimulated some lengthy discussion on the literary similarities and differences between the book and movie! Kelly is a positive light in our school."

**Kim Sullivan**, *Special Education Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Kim takes the time to get to know each one of her students as an individual child. She learns their interests and tracks down information and fun motivators to engage every child in her instruction. Kim researches the latest techniques and curricula to ensure she delivers the best interventions to help address her students' needs. She has mentored dozens of teachers and aides, taught hundreds of students, and been a support to and a supporter of 4J's public schools. She exemplifies the best in teaching."

**Suzi Swinehart**, *First Grade Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Ms. Suzi has gone above and beyond in this unprecedented year, balancing what I would assume has been one of her most challenging teaching years, while also coaching and mentoring a student-teacher. It is abundantly clear that Ms. Suzi has worked long hours to master the technical tools and skills to make the distance learning environment easy and fun for the students to navigate! My expectations for my daughter's first grade experience have been blown out of the water due to Ms. Suzi."

**Desiree Talley**, *Third Grade Teacher, Holt Elementary School*

"Ms. Talley goes above and beyond to create unique and meaningful learning opportunities for her students. She provides individual and thoughtful responses for every student in need. Ms. Talley approaches her classroom time with a deep care for each student while considering their unique and varying situations. She provides 'whole brain care' for her students. She brings a passion for literacy and a world of fiction and fantasy to students, and helps them to find fun and meaning in their education."

**Kathleen Taylor**, *Science Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Kathleen is a hard-working, innovative and thoughtful teacher who, through perseverance, determination and dedication, improves the learning experience for all of her students. She uses her experience and knowledge of her subject to make sure that every student has the ability to learn and grow in her classroom. She works incredibly hard to make science fun and engaging for students, while also helping other staff work through issues and find ways to succeed."

**Carrie Tilson**, *Counselor, Monroe Middle School*

"Carrie Tilson works tirelessly to support and advocate for all the students who need her help, no matter what it is that they are seeking her support for. She accepts and meets students where they are and walks with them on the journey to continue to grow and evolve. She is known by the students, and they trust her and know that, at the end of the day, she is there to support them."

**Matthew Trent**, *Math Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"For a second-year teacher, Mr. Trent's repertoire of teaching practices, especially over Zoom, is amazing. Every time I pop into a Zoom room, he is laughing, students are laughing, and they are learning. He takes his work seriously, but does not take himself very seriously, which is refreshing at this time. Mr. Trent is engaging, inspiring, collaborative, and has all the intangibles that will make him a lifelong educator who students will not forget. Some people just 'have it,' and there is no doubt that he does."

**Nancy Unruh**, *Kindergarten Teacher, Edison Elementary School*

"Ms. Nancy has worked hard this year to ease the youngest new students at Edison into their strange new world of remote and hybrid schooling. Her warm, upbeat and professional demeanor, along with her high level of engagement with the kids, both individually and as a kindergarten community, is so much of what is needed right now. Thank you, Ms. Nancy!"

**Julie Vignoul**, *Media Specialist, South Eugene High School*

"Julie Vignoul, librarian superstar, has been a fabulous support for her school community for years. Since the onset of the pandemic, she has been integral in providing technology leadership to her school community. She works tirelessly to support and collaborate with teachers to bring the latest and greatest resources, technology and literature to her community of learners. Julie is a librarian for the ages and an asset to the 4J learning community!"

**Ken Walker**, *Language Arts Teacher, Madison Middle School*

"Both my kids love him. He takes the time to get to know each one of his students. He cares so deeply, making the kids feel like one of his own children. He is an awesome teacher."

**Stephanie Waples**, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Ms. Waples is unwavering in her support of the success of her students. Through every turn of comprehensive distance learning, hybrid learning and the changes in between, she was a pillar of support, always putting the needs of her students first. In a year of change and unknowns, Ms. Waples was consistent and steady."

**Alice Williamson**, *Title I Coordinator, Chávez Elementary School*

"So many students at Chávez learn to read because of Alice Williamson's master teaching, her brilliance at maximizing support for students, and her incredible work ethic. Students in Alice's groups always make huge gains and love working with her. Whether spending hours working on the master schedule or creating and maintaining the portal that students use to access their Zoom, Alice makes so much happen for the kids and staff at Chávez."

**Dave Wines**, *Fourth/Fifth Grade Teacher, Edgewood Elementary School*

"Dave Wines is an exceptional educator with a level of unsurpassed depth, empathy and connection with his students. He has been able to create and sustain a classroom community filled with joy and learning in this time of extreme sadness and tumult. He has gone above and beyond to build connections in his classroom, and with and between his students. Mr. Wines is, in a word, fabulous!"

**Brandy Wormdahl**, *Physical Education Teacher/Girls Soccer Coach, North Eugene High School*

"Brandy is a tremendous advocate for North Eugene High School. She communicates effectively with students and parents with weekly emails and other communications that keep all of us apprised of the latest OSAA rules and regulations. Moreover, Brandy is a positive light as she mentors students, both male and female, and gives them support, inspiration and encouragement to do their best. Brandy encourages students to learn new sports or athletic skills to foster learning and personal growth."

**Janine Zimmer-Berg**, *Third Grade Teacher, Edison Elementary School*

"This last year has been particularly difficult for everyone, but Janine has found new ways to help children learn and enjoy being together. She has designed her teaching plans to align with interests that her students have expressed. She has also provided additional instruction (recorded and written) and has broken up large assignments into multiple smaller ones for children with different abilities. I cannot stress enough how much extra time and effort Janine has put into school this year. Her work is greatly appreciated."

**Lisa Zluticky**, *First Grade Teacher, Holt Elementary School*

"Mrs. Zluticky is always willing to meet and discuss ways to make things fit her students' current needs. She is so amazing at listening to students and actually hearing their issues without making them feel bad for discussing it. She has just done such a great job at making my son love his class and her, and we appreciate it so much. She took this virtual school year and turned it into a year the kids can look back on with fondness."

**To the amazing educators  
nominated for the ACE  
Awards and to all the 4J staff  
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 generous grants  
to the ACE Champions.**