

2022 ACE Awards

A Champion in Education

Virtual Awards Ceremony
May 10, 2022



Virtual Ceremony
Tuesday, May 10, 2022
6:00–7:30 p.m.

Opening Performance by
Sheldon High School Dublinaires

Recognition of Nominees
& Presentation of Awards
Cydney Vandercar, Interim Superintendent

2022 ACE Award: Administrator

2022 ACE Award: Classified Staff

2022 ACE Award: Volunteer

2022 ACE Award: Teacher & Licensed Specialist

2022 ACE Award: Lifetime Achievement

Closing Performance by
North Eugene Ukulele Allstars

ABOUT THE ACE AWARDS

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

ACE Nomination Categories

Administrator

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

Classified Staff

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

Volunteer

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

Teacher & Licensed Specialist

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

Lifetime Achievement

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

2022 ACE AWARD NOMINEES



Administrators

Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff

"Kerry develops our potential and capacity with suggestions that are to the point. She knows and shares how to problem-solve. She is a calm yet dynamic leader. She provides inspiration and support to her close team and in the 4J staff community at large. Kerry is excellent in communicating the district's goals in a pragmatic way. She is efficient and so dedicated to 4J."

Lisa Fjordbeck, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Superintendent's Office

"Lisa applies her warm heart and listening ear to every situation she encounters and person she interacts with. She can turn effortlessly from coordinating a meeting or event, to responding to a phone call from an upset parent, to preparing official materials and correspondence, to juggling schedules and helping people connect—and throughout everything she does, she responds with care, connection, and compassion. Every person who interacts with Lisa walks away feeling truly heard and cared for."

Erin Gaston, Principal, Howard Elementary School

"Erin Gaston is a devoted and passionate principal, reminding us of why we chose to be in education and encouraging us through her timely humor and astute observations. She has fostered relationships with families and staff to strengthen our school community. Erin has helped us navigate through some of our toughest years in education, and we are grateful for her dedication and leadership."

AJ Hruby, Principal, Arts & Technology Academy

"Ms. AJ's concern for the physical and emotional safety of all students and families is evident in her actions. She doesn't just talk, she DOES! Ms. AJ is very approachable, and our boys adore her. Because of her amazing communication and professionalism, ATA is a place we feel good about sending our kids to each day. Her dedication and passion are unmatched, and we feel lucky to have her as our principal!"

Mike Ingman, *Principal, Sheldon High School*

"When I think about people who demonstrate student-centered teaching and leadership, Mike Ingman rises straight to the top of my list. He trusts the professionalism of his staff and encourages innovation and creativity. Mike is a model of honesty, celebrating accomplishments while also admitting when he makes mistakes or things don't go as planned. He is open, warm, and genuinely caring."

Hillary Johnson, *Communications Coordinator, Communications Department*

"Hillary invests her all in everything she does in her work at 4J. The communications projects she produces are impeccable in their accuracy and presentation. Her leadership in guiding the work of staff in communications and translations has been integral to the success of that work. She celebrates the small and the big things that make 4J a special place. Her professionalism, her tender heart, her patience and support, her knowledge and expertise, and her joyful personality is a true gift to our district."

Courtney Leonard, *Principal, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Courtney is a natural at effective communication with students, staff and the community. Every interaction, email, or gesture from Courtney is an opportunity to observe her talents. I have seen Courtney approach a group of students experiencing challenges and each one walked away feeling heard, as well as armed with strategies for the rest of their day. She easily creates and implements communication strategies at Roosevelt Middle School in the mist of challenging times in the classroom and around the world."

Tom Maloney, *Principal, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

"Tom came out of retirement to fill the role as principal in 4J this year and I am so thankful. He has taken the time to advocate for and help our student with reading and writing deficits. Tom is energetic and answers emails at 6:00 a.m., even on vacations! Before school even started in September, Tom initiated individual communication. He gives up his office space, so that I can tutor my son in reading. He is a breath of fresh air and will be missed dearly."

Sheila Minney, *Principal, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Her unwavering dedication to her staff and students is to ensure the best educational environment you can imagine, especially in this time of COVID. She is there to make sure all areas of the school are running at the highest level and makes every staff and student want to come back every day!"

Jim Moore, *Principal, Edgewood Elementary School*

"Jim Moore is the ultimate principal: kind, professional and dedicated to each child in his school getting the education they need. Through the pandemic he has risen to the challenges our educators face and supported children, families and his staff through very hard times. From delivering educational materials to each child's home, to navigating COVID-19 testing for children and maintaining the highest standard of care, he can pivot like a pro and adjust with a smile."

David Nelson, *Senior Systems Administrator, Technology Department*

"David is a tech guy with tech expertise and a techie sense of humor, and work that has an impact far beyond his tech role. He brings all of his skills and experience to bear on supporting and improving technical systems that are critical to district operations, staff efforts and student learning. He responds swiftly and expertly to support needs related to the district's website system, while juggling his many other responsibilities."

Christine Nesbit, *General Counsel, Legal Services*

"Christine is a strongly competent and broadly respected attorney, and a highly valued member of the district team. Legal services support often is taken for granted, but we should not overlook Christine's expert counsel, sensible steadying approach, and local insight that is informed by her legal background and her long history with this district, as well as her experience as a parent in the district."

Tris O'Shaughnessy, *Executive Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services Department*

Tris served until recently as the district's sole school choice coordinator, a complex, specialized and critical role working with every 4J school and many hundreds of families each year. She worked constantly and unfailingly to provide high-quality customer service to both families accessing their school choice options and the school offices enrolling transfer students, while maintaining the integrity, fairness and consistency of the established school choice process."

Natalie Oliver, *Principal, Adams Elementary School*

Mrs. Oliver is dedicated to the well being of each and every student, regardless of their race or ethnicity. My daughter had a racist experience at school, which Mrs. Oliver handled with the utmost severity & seriousness, and made me feel comforted despite my frustration. More importantly, she took the extra time to make my daughter feel safe. She has demonstrated first hand that equity & inclusion is central to Adams mission.

Seth Pfaefflin, *Student Services Administrator, Student Services Department*

"Seth is a very hard worker who balances the needs of families, teachers and students. He has a very challenging position but you would never know it! He is always professional, kind and supportive. He makes himself available to problem solve issues as they come up. As a special educator, it is crucial to have administrative support, and Seth is exceptional in that role."

Karen Ramírez Gutiérrez, *Principal, River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School*

"Maestra Ramírez selflessly provides anything and everything to those who come to her with questions or concerns and knows first-hand the duties that come with being an educator and understands that the job does not stop just because the clock says so (she does encourage to pass the baton every now and then, so that we may rest though). She has the experience and the quality of a fantastic, fearless administrator and is an excellent role model for those around her. If 'echarle ganas' could be embodied, it would be Karen Ramírez Gutierrez."

Dawn Strong, *Human Resources & COVID Administrator, Education Center*

"Dawn's patience and professionalism have served the district incredibly well as we navigate this ever-changing pandemic landscape. Together with her team, she developed the systems and protocols that have kept 4J staff and students safe throughout the pandemic. Dawn built relationships and collaborated with local and state health agencies and educational leaders. It's worth noting that Dawn's leadership also earned her recognition from local and state health officials, and our district became an example for other districts in COVID-19 management."

John Wayland, *Principal, Kelly Middle School*

"John has a unique leadership style that promotes and inspires a community of caring and diverse educators. In addition, he is excellent at reaching kids and getting on their level. As a minority teacher, he has made me feel validated and appreciated. He is a top-notch administrator who is inclusive and possesses candor and passion for education."

Mike Yocum, *Assistant Principal, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Mike is one of the most hard-working, dedicated and professional administrators. He embodies both compassion and justice for our students. Even when students have given up on themselves, Mike is there with a story, an encouraging word, and a reminder that the adults are there to help and support. He is constantly working to understand and serve every student at Roosevelt. He treats students with dignity and respect on every occasion, and no one enjoys seeing a student find success in their learning or behavior more than Mike."

Classified Staff

Kelly Ayres, Registrar, Roosevelt Middle School

"Working with Kelly in the front office, we have come to know her as a dedicated, thorough, and detail-oriented individual. We have been tremendously impressed with Kelly's professionalism, integrity, and willingness to go the extra mile to support students' success. 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."

Melissa Baker, Behavioral Support Assistant, McCornack Elementary School

"I've seen Melissa's connections with students pay huge dividends for them. For example, she was working with a student who would almost always be out in the hallway or wander the school. Melissa was able to build a connection with this student and help them get back into their classroom and rejoin their classroom community. Melissa always shows that she cares about each student she works with and that makes her an extremely valuable asset to McCornack."

Joanne Block, Educational Assistant, Awbrey Park Elementary School

"Joanne has dedicated 25 years to working with our kindergartens at Awbrey Park. She is a valued team member, who always puts her school first. Her dedication to her school and commitment to being here is amazing. . Joanne is ALWAYS HERE, she is someone ALL staff can depend on. In this time of not knowing who will be out of school due to so many reasons, she is a pillar to lean on and know who has our backs."

Racheal Bryant, Special Ed Educational Assistant, Howard Elementary School

"Racheal Bryant's devotion to children with complex needs is unparalleled. She is dedicated to supporting every aspect of the educational experience for the children she supports, including physical needs, communication support, feeding and medical protocols and the opportunity for inclusion. Racheal's devotion to our daughter has been life changing for all of us, and we are deeply grateful for all that she does to ensure that the children she supports are able to experience school without boundaries. It is because of Racheal that our daughter has had the opportunity to expand her communication skills, build friendships and experience life as a 4th grader without stigma or labels."

Michelle Buffoni, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, K-5 Connect*

"Michelle models joy and enthusiasm for learning, as well as perseverance and passion for self improvement and personal growth. When students meet parts of their IEP goals, Michelle celebrates with them and then communicates with me so I can create new materials and plans to take them to the next step in their learning. She is creative and passionate about keeping students engaged and helping them find their joy and enthusiasm for learning. She makes all of our learning experiences better. Thank you, Michelle!"

Katie Burns, *School Secretary, Fox Hollow Campus*

"As secretary at one of the most challenging schools in the district, she has supported and performed well above expectations in her first year at Fox Hollow Campus. Fox Hollow would not be this great and functional place without her sustainability, consistency and support-for-all mindset. She is fierce, resilient, and a great role model for our students as we have overcome many challenges and changes this year. She has persevered through it all as our rock. I appreciate you."

Sonja Casarez, *Human Resources Specialist II, Human Resources Department*

"Ms. Casarez was given the job of processing applications for substitute teachers. There was a shortage of subs and she made it her mission to fix it. She clearly is a team player as she works with all to get it done. I am a recently retired MD and never saw hiring so efficient and so caring in my whole professional career. I was so impressed by her style."

Rosa Castro, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Student Services Department*

"Rosi is always responsible, compassionate, optimistic and encouraging. She cares deeply for our students and empowers and inspires them to reach their full potential. Rosi models joy and enthusiasm for learning as well as perseverance and passion for self improvement and personal growth. When students meet their IEP goals Rosi makes custom certificates for them that get printed out and several students have been extremely excited when they received them. She spreads joy and optimism and is responsible and a good role model. She makes all of our learning experiences better. Thank you Rosi!"

Gina Catlin, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Spencer Butte Middle School*

"Gina has been an invaluable team member in the midst of a very difficult year for the CLC special education program. Her greatest strength is her ability to make meaningful connections with students. She is able to use these relationships to encourage students to work to the best of their abilities. She advocates for students in a respectful way that helps teachers see students' strengths. The progress that students have made this year would not have been possible without Gina's hard work and dedication."

Ryan Conaghan, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Fox Hollow Campus*

“Despite having little experience working directly with students who have high needs and come from traumatic backgrounds as our students typically do, Ryan jumped right in and made immediate and impactful relationships with all of the students—not just those in the classroom he is assigned to. He is an eager learner and continues to grow his skills. Amazingly, Ryan has not missed a day of work, which provides students with a consistent adult who all know and love him.”

Ron Daniels, *Bus Driver, Transportation Department*

“Ron has been my siblings’ bus driver for six years. Every morning he stops in front of my house with the biggest smile on his face, saying a cheerful good morning; I have never seen Ron in a bad mood. In fact, there have been times one of my siblings has been running late and he waited for them. He genuinely cares about each student he drives and takes time out of his day to listen to their stories.”

Nancy Ehlers, *Attendance Clerk, Monroe Middle School*

“Nancy has served Monroe Middle School for nearly a decade. She is one of the first faces you see at Monroe and one of the last. She cares deeply about making sure students attend school and goes above and beyond to serve students in the office and health room. She also is very helpful to our families when they need assistance. She does everything asked of her and more. She is meticulous in her work and leads with her heart.”

Maria Eichner, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Howard Elementary School*

“Maria is one of the best educational assistants I have had the pleasure of working with. She is kind, knowledgeable, hard working, helpful and connects with all of our students. She is a team player and encourages the best of those around her. She is such an asset to our team and loved by the students immensely. Maria is the peaceful calm amongst chaos and we are so grateful to work with and learn from her.”

Theresa Elmore, *Attendance Clerk, Roosevelt Middle School*

“Theresa is caring and compassionate, dedicated to the success of all of Roosevelt’s students, and a positive member of the Roosevelt community. At any given moment, Theresa is fielding numerous demands on her time and attention. Whether answering a question from a student, supporting a student’s medical needs, tracking a missing student, getting up to let someone into the building, answering the phone, or updating an attendance data spreadsheet, Theresa effectively completes her responsibilities each day with a positive attitude and a smile. Theresa is ALWAYS willing to help.”

Valerie Falleur, *School Secretary, Eugene Education Options*

"Valerie is so much more than her job title as head secretary. Inside the walls of EEO, students are truly at the center of every decision, a value that Valerie lives each day. She is compassionate, patient, generous and dedicated to the community. Every day, she actively seeks ways to support the students at EEO in their journey toward success."

Deanna Finn, *Data & Research Analyst, Student Services Department*

"Deanna Finn has helped track and organize records for special educators and families, as well as the district as a whole, for many years. She is efficient, helpful and kind, and has taught us all to use a paper clip, not a staple, when submitting paperwork. Her workload may be invisible to many, but it is invaluable."

Carrie Frazier, *Educational Assistant, Camas Ridge Elementary School*

"Carrie is an amazing support to a high needs, ever changing, emotionally charged kindergarten class. She is a great communicator with parents who ask for more communication, while maintaining respect and collaboration with the also amazing lead kindergarten teacher! We appreciate her dedication, communication, smiles, and want her to know she is special and acknowledged."

Laura Fuhrman, *Volunteer Coordinator & Educational Assistant, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Laura works tirelessly for the students, teachers and staff in our building. She has made it possible for many programs to continue in the absence of volunteers due to COVID protocols who used to do them, including keeping the library open and functioning for students. She has cheerfully taken on these projects, each of which directly impacts the student experience at Roosevelt. On top of all that, Laura is unfailingly kind, inclusive and welcoming."

Aidan Fulton, *Behavioral Support Specialist, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Aidan stands out because of his innate ability to build relationships with students, reflect with humility on his practice, and harness his incredible initiative. He is bright, heart-centered and driven to succeed — and his success is predicated on supporting and lifting others while providing skills and coaching to students the most in need."

Patricia Gehlhaar, *School Secretary, Gilham Elementary School*

"Patti Gehlhaar is the first face when you walk through the doors at Gilham, and her warm smile welcomes students, families and staff. Her duties range from registering new students, to taking phone calls, to handing out Band-Aids, to helping students in the office, and how she just generally keeps us all going is remarkable! She has a warm and lovely way of lifting your spirits and making you feel valued and special."

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

"Perla is a person that gives all she has to her job and it shows, with the constant gratitude and love she receives. She's such a calm person that brings tranquility into anyone's life by simply having a conversation. You are an amazing human being and don't let anyone change that!"

Elizabeth Griego, *Bilingual/Bicultural Office Support, Howard Elementary School*

"Elizabeth is always looking out for my son's needs, and she helps me a lot to understand the processes and requirements that are presented to me for my son's daily school routines. She does this in my own language, and she is very clear with her explanations."

Greg Groberg, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Churchill High School*

"Greg is an outstanding educator with a heart of gold. His commitment to students is second to none. He helps students understand difficult concepts in the areas of math and science. He is a vital member of the Churchill special education team, and both students and staff appreciate his efforts and ability to connect with students. Double G is the man!"

Tory Guenther, *Educational Assistant, Sheldon High School*

"Tory is an indefatigable educator who has a keen interest in her students' success. They ask for her in particular when they have any English Language Arts or social studies work to do because they know she knows her stuff, and she cares about them above all. She brings a wealth of ability and knowledge to the table and our students are the richer for it."

Dulce Guillen, *Cultural Navigator, Equity, Inclusion & Instruction Department*

"Dulce Guillen exemplifies excellence in education. She gently but fiercely advocates for students' success by working both behind the scenes with community partners and more directly in numerous school buildings. Her focus is student success with a special attention to students who might 'fall through the cracks' due to experiencing barriers navigating the school system. She is the person who gets students to school, makes sure school feels safe and supportive to them, and helps the schools be responsive to students' needs."

Ruth Guzman Sanchez, Behavioral Support Assistant, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School

Maestra Guzman is an amazing support to her students. She has a lovely, gentle way of interacting with each student so they know how much she cares for and supports them. Her calm presence is so important in her role as behavior support assistant. Students know that she is a safe and trusted adult who is there to help.

Jason Harter, Building Behavior Support Assistant, Arts & Technology Academy

"Jason is an amazing co-worker who leads by example and is the consummate professional. He is first to volunteer for any odd job that comes up at the school. He is firm yet compassionate with students and faculty. As the behavior support assistant, he has made a positive impact, not only on the students on his caseload but the entire student body."

Lori Henry, School Secretary, Howard Elementary School

"Ms. Henry has been an incredible advocate for my children throughout our time at Howard. She has supported our family in a number of ways, going above and beyond to make sure we had what we needed. She was quick to answer questions and provide assistance when we decided to enroll in Eugene Online Academy last fall as the pandemic numbers spiked. And she was a valuable resource when we decided to re-enroll at Howard this February. Thanks for all you do, Lori!"

Bert Herbert, Custodial/Maintenance Coordinator I, Edgewood Elementary School

"He works really hard and is always very nice to all the kids. My son has mentioned him by name several times. High praise from the mouth of a kindergartner!"

Susan Holmgren, Behavioral Support Assistant, Gilham Elementary School

"Susan is a truly phenomenal educational assistant and coworker. Students seek her out to support them because she has proven that they can trust her, she values them, sees their potential, and that she will help them build the skills and resiliency to work through challenges on a daily basis to reach their behavior and academic goals. She is incredibly intelligent, kind, funny, warm, and performs her difficult job with grace and composure."

Rie Ishida, Bilingual Educational Assistant, Kelly Middle School

"She helps with Japanese and is super nice. Whenever I don't know the kanji, she tells me the kanji and then she tells me the meaning."

Karen Kingzett, *School Secretary, Roosevelt Middle School*

"In her 18 years at Roosevelt, Karen has worked tirelessly to support any need that comes up in the school from staff and students. Importantly, she consistently works with a positive attitude and her work ethic and work quality is exemplary, regardless of task, time of day, or any other factor. Calm in the face of crisis, thoughtful in a busy day, and forward-thinking about problems to solve, our entire school could not run without Karen's expertise and vision."

Alexis Krivchuk, *School Secretary, Cal Young Middle School*

"While always demonstrating a strong work ethic and high skill as office manager at Cal Young, Alexis Krivchuk has consistently improved by finding ways to enhance Cal Young's programs supporting students, staff, and community. She creates positive connections with students and looks for opportunities to help them lead. Alexis Krivchuk is truly a 'glue' of the school and is valuable beyond her role due to her positive relationship skills, work ethic, and systems thinking. Cal Young is lucky to have her!"

Sandy Krupicka, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Camas Ridge Elementary School*

"Sandy is committed to helping all students succeed and works incredibly hard to motivate the students in her care. To me, she is the kind of person who is the heart of a team: dedicated, humorous, flexible and encouraging. It is an honor to work with her and to learn from her approach. She is able to help many students achieve their goals, and supports her fellow educators with her strong contributions to our school."

César López, *Bilingual Educational Assistant, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Cesar Lopez-Reyes is one of those rare educational mentors who is highly effective at both edifying students on the curriculum and connecting with them on a deeper level. His support for every student in all subject matters and grade levels at ATA is a substantial component to the glue that binds us all together as a team. As a bilingual education assistant, Cesar is a tireless advocate for the students while he manifests our school's mission to inspire, challenge, and equip our students with the knowledge and skills to succeed in life."

Jennifer MacPherson, *School Secretary, Camas Ridge Elementary School*

"Jennifer is the heart and soul of Camas Ridge, willing to do whatever she can to help students, staff and parents succeed. No matter the situation, Jennifer helps others come to a positive result. It doesn't matter if it is a kindergartener having a meltdown, a staff member who is frustrated, or a parent who is not sure what to do to help their child — Jennifer helps them find success. Every day, Jennifer turns lemons into lemonade."

Katherine McGraw, *Educational Assistant, Edgewood Elementary School*

"Ever since the day Katherine joined my son's kindergarten class, he has talked about how much time she spends with him and how much she helps him. I often see her at pickup waiting at the back of the line with him so he can keep talking to her. She's consistently kind and patient, and I'm so grateful to have such a great person interacting with my kid."

Jason Moch, *Custodial/Maintenance Coordinator II, Monroe Middle School*

"Jason works incredibly hard and is extremely selfless, sacrificial and responsive. He learned that kids love ping-pong so we decided to buy an extra ping pong table. He drove his personal work truck the next day to pick up a ping pong table and had it all set up within the hour! He has been flexible and willing all year during the pandemic and our school is grateful to have him as our lead custodian!"

Don Morasci, *Custodian, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Don is a delight to work with. He makes sure the whole school runs smoothly, and he does this without often getting noticed. He takes out our garbage, cleans our floors and bathrooms, and makes sure we're well stocked up on paper towels, which is a big task given the amount of hand washing we do these days. Without these tasks getting done, I would not be able to teach my students well nor would they be as ready to learn."

Jana Ouimet, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Gilham Elementary School*

"Jana Ouimet is a contradiction in that she is at the same time calm and a whirlwind of industriousness. She has such kindness and so much energy. She walks faster than some people jog and is all over the building taking care of her CLC students and any other student that she can help along the way."

Kelsey Pedersen, *Behavioral Support Assistant, Camas Ridge Elementary School*

"Kelsey is on the move all day. Kelsey greets students with a smile and a warm welcome as they get to school. Kelsey can be overheard giving students words of encouragement and support as they move through the halls on the way to help support a student in crisis. At the end of the day, you will always find Kelsey making sure students have a positive interaction as they head home, no matter how challenging the day was."

Kelly Quiroz, *Read Right Educational Assistant, Churchill High School*

"Kelly's work with Spanish speaking students in my class is invaluable. She translates verbal instructions, field questions, and trouble shoots with these students in a way I cannot with my limited Spanish skills. There are a number of students who have been extremely successful in my classes, and I really do believe that Kelly's has set these students up for success."

Terrie Randall, *Bus Driver, Transportation Department*

"Ms. Valerie Frizzle has a magic school bus, but Terrie Randall has created a safe haven school bus! Each day she goes above and beyond to show our kiddos love and kindness, greeting them with a wave and personal greeting as they walk up the stairs to their seats. She keeps everyone safe, both physically and emotionally, and makes sure every child is respectful and held to a high standard of positive citizenship. She is dependable and hilarious. She is simply wonderful!"

Natalie Reed, *Title I Educational Assistant, Chávez Elementary School*

"Natalie is very enthusiastic and makes the start of our day pleasant. She smiles as we pass through the crosswalk each day. Her rapport with the kids is amazing. My daughter talks about her every day! That means a lot. She is out at recess and building relationships with students that need her. My daughter was one of them."

Julia Rice, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

"Julia is an amazing support staff in our classroom! She is always ready to help in any situation and she keeps a positive attitude. I depend on her unwavering support every single day. Julia is beyond amazing with our students, she is engaging, patient, and encouraging. She is truly a gem in our Life Skills classroom. Her determination to push through challenges is a great example to not only the kids she teaches, but also to her teammates."

Karra Russell, *Special Ed & ELD Educational Assistant, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Karra works in the learning center, but her reach is much larger than the students who qualify for educational assistance. She cares deeply for the comfort and emotional well-being of all students and will do everything she can to help make their time at Buena Vista safe and happy. She is also a gifted educator, doing all she can to ensure that IEP goals are being met. She's creative and flexible in her teaching, making learning fun and successful for students."

Kellie Salinas, *Bilingual Educational Assistant, River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School*

"Kellie is an incredible educator, colleague and asset to our community. Her incredibly fortunate students benefit immeasurably from her knowledge, expertise, cultural awareness, and talent for bilingual education. She is especially adept at working with newcomers and students who are identified as English language learners and also have 504 and IEP accommodations. While maintaining high expectations for her students, she helps the students grow with kindness, empathy, consistency and skill at building rapport."

Jason Schanze, *Educational Assistant, Chávez Elementary School*

"Working with Jason is like working with energy in a bottle. His enthusiasm for what he does spills out and inspires not only the students he works with, but the entire kindergarten team. He works tirelessly to improve his teaching practices and to puzzle out what each student needs. He has worked for years in the KITS program during the summer. To me, his support and work ethic make him invaluable in my classroom."

Shawna Scroggins, *Administrative Assistant, Student Service Department*

"Shawna is an unsung hero. She is a staff member who works so hard behind the scenes, embracing the challenges of the work, making sure the SSD team is on top of so many details, and showing up every day with a can-do attitude. Shawna is a great team player who knows how to keep the department in good order and moving forward even when there are challenges and obstacles to overcome. We just can't imagine what our department would be like without her!"

Gery Selland, *Substitute Custodian, Custodial Services*

"Gery has always been a kind, friendly individual that jumps in with any custodial need. There are times when I walk into my room and things are cleaned that are not usually cleaned or my office is vacuumed. I quickly ask who our custodian is, and I smile when I realize that Gery was there. Of course he was – always stepping up to go above and beyond, even though he isn't even our regular custodian."

Debra Short, *Educational Assistant-Library, Cal Young Middle School*

A true team player, Ms. Deb is someone who can be counted on repeatedly when needed. Whether being the crossing guard or an Oregon Battle of the Books coach, she is ready to chip in and do more than her share. She is a calm, loving presence in our school who makes a tremendous difference in our teaching and with our students' learning and well-being.

Eugenia Sileoni, *District Translation Specialist, Superintendent's Office*

"Eugenia took on the newly created position of district translation specialist this year, and her work already has been a tremendous benefit to the district, our families and our community. She provides swift, accurate and highly competent translation of district communications to ensure that our growing population of Spanish-speaking families have access to important information without confusion, delays or other barriers. Eugenia is a star!"

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

"Jackie's mind is always thinking about how her students could have a better recess, morning greeting, lunch interaction and end-of-the-day goodbye. There are no words to fully express how many parents feel at ease knowing that she is present at school and will do everything in her power to keep the students safe, cared for and tended to. She has a kindness that is rarely seen and is very patient with the students. She's an amazing human. My kids talk about her to this day."

Cheryl Stuebing, *Office Assistant, Edgewood Elementary School*

"Cheryl has wonderful gifts when working with students. Her job has her all over the building, and that includes a lot of time with students. She's out at recess, in the library and lunchroom — always helping the kids. More than that, Cheryl is constantly seeking ways to connect with them. She's gentle, firm, flexible and guiding. In other words, an absolute gem!"

Katherine Tagwerker, *Food Service Coordinator II, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Kathie works tirelessly. In the last two years, when Nutrition Services was called upon to feed families in more ways than ever before, she has been there: summers, breaks, food boxes — you name it, she was there. She happily moved kitchens at least eight times in two years just so she could keep feeding 'her kids.' She keeps everyone, kids and staff alike, laughing and enthusiastic, the perfect combination of sass and class."

Campbell Trangmar, *Custodian, South Eugene High School*

"Everyone who passes Campbell in the hallway is met with eye contact and a warm greeting. In my opinion, Campbell has been a major positive influence on staff and students to help slowly rebuild a sense of school community during the transition back to in-person learning. Campbell is going above and beyond his daily responsibilities, doing it because he is a kind and hard-working human being. He is spreading smiles and joy throughout the building."

Alicia Uteg, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Adams Elementary School*

"Alicia finds joy in the present moment and inspires students to do the same, sometimes while they are feeling some anxiety about learning difficult concepts or working through conflicts with peers. This enables them to feel a lift in stressors and increases their motivation. In such a challenging year, her approach is deeply felt and appreciated."

Marilyn Van Buren, *Bus Aide, Transportation Department*

"Whenever I see Marilyn with students, they look engaged, safe and knowing Marilyn, they are cared for. She deeply cares about the success of her students, her team, and the district as a whole. I have worked with her on grounds and I am constantly grateful that Marilyn is so supportive of us with communication and some light "touch ups" at her schools."

Jenny Van Sickle, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Jenny Van Sickle is a ray of sunshine on the Spring Creek campus. She is always working hard to create a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone on campus. Whenever you see her on campus, you can always guarantee you will find Jenny with a smile on her face engaging with all students, or collaborating with teachers."

Thomas Weaver, *Food Service Coordinator II, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Thomas is amazing! He is super reliable and genuinely cares about not only making sure our kids get fed, but also that they feel cared for and seen. His speed and productivity in the cafeteria is remarkable, and he does a great job leading his team. He is also so helpful to our staff whenever we need anything, and we are so thankful to have him running our cafeteria."

Joannie Weyant, *Food Service Coordinator II, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Joanie is the sunshine of Willagillespie. She is the first person on campus in the morning, and always has a bright smile on her face. She works tirelessly to make sure every student on campus has a warm breakfast and lunch ready for them daily. She works so hard daily and oftentimes her hard work and effort goes unnoticed, yet she continues with a smiling face and pride in all she does."

Linda Willis, *School Secretary, Gilham Elementary School*

"Within a matter of minutes you can find Linda running copies to a teacher, getting an ice pack for a student, escorting a sick student to the office, and at the same time answering the phones. She's been one half of the heart of Gilham and is just the very best at what educators strive to be. She inspires everyone around her to be their best and feel like they are capable of achieving that."

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

"Our school would have never been able to cope with the pandemic without Rose's work. She is constantly checking on everyone's needs. I see her every day when she drops off a computer or a charger for a student. She helps locate tech material when students do not know where it is. She works endlessly, with grace and kindness."

Pamela Windham, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Kelly Middle School*

"Ms. Windham is working very, very hard to support all the many needs we have at our school. She is able to motivate and support students in my class who produce minimal work independently."

Justin Wisner, *Special Ed Educational Assistant, Howard Elementary School*

"Justin is the 'calm in the chaos, the steady in the storm.' Fairly new to supporting students, he has stepped up to the plate: planning for and teaching academic and social skills groups; guiding student behaviors at recess; encouraging students to have a love of learning; and willing to step into any role necessary to make school a safe and friendly place for staff and students."

Jaimelyn Womack, *Behavioral Support Assistant, Cal Young Middle School*

"Jaimelyn turns middle school chaos into middle school fun. She believes there is an answer to every challenge, and she is willing to both ask for help and provide help on the way to a solution. When students need help, she is one of the first staff members they go to because they know when they leave her office they will have a resolution that will help them navigate the rest of their day."

Nora Young, *Educational Assistant, Chávez Elementary School*

"She is the recess queen extraordinaire. She is absolutely the champion of all children and goes out of her way to encourage, support, celebrate and respect them. She works tirelessly to give them the best recess experience they can have and always with an upbeat and positive attitude in whatever weather. Her dedication to education is untiring and phenomenal, as she goes out of her way to create fun and informative lessons for her small groups."

Andy Zuniga, *Custodial/Maintenance Coordinator I, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Andy is such a wonderful addition to our school community. He has been wonderful with a student in my class who needs extra support to feel cared for and secure in our school. Andy invited the student to help him every day after lunch, giving the student a special job while talking with them about what was on their mind, and making small talk to help them feel welcome. Physically, our school is clean and safe. But Andy's ability to connect with students and staff is what makes him truly shine!"

Volunteers

Dan Ambrose, *South Eugene High School*

"As a volunteer fundraiser and Friends of South Eugene board member, Dan Ambrose has devoted endless hours to supporting South Eugene students and programs, to celebrating the accomplishments of distinguished alumni and staff, and to bringing together generations of South Eugene graduates and families to help support future generations of students in our community. Thank you, Dan"

Jacy Berg, *Chávez Elementary School*

"Jacy is our dedicated parent group leader, and she also serves on site council. She has been a lifeline between school and families during the pandemic, when so many of our usual communication systems shut down. Jacy is passionate about making Chávez a better place for all. She has been extremely influential in connecting our school community to the neighborhood and city communities. She is a fantastic partner and communicator and has dedicated many hours this year to serving our school."

Jordan Blair, *Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Ms. Blair is a champion for school success. Through distance learning and the current tumultuous school year, Ms. Blair has stepped up to support students, staff and our community. She had dedicated her time to lead the parent group in supporting students and staff, and volunteers at recess and in the cafeteria. She always arrives with a huge smile on her face and is happy to lend a hand with everything from supervision to cleaning up spills and helping get students in line."

Paul Bodin, *Madison Middle School & Adams, Edison and Holt elementary schools*

"Paul has dedicated hours of travel, created interesting and relevant content, and delivered instruction to my students, which has taught them to discuss and consider multiple perspectives about difficult topics. Students have learned to discuss—with civility—the hot button issues of our time. His work has had ripple effects in the class to the point where students want to discuss issues using philosophical conversation. Paul is an exceptional educator and wonderful volunteer!"

April Colgrove, *Monroe Middle School*

"April has dedicated hundreds of hours to our community in so many unique ways that impacts our students and staff. Her presence and steadfast support is a morale booster for our entire community as she does so many little things that make a big thing. Through all of her efforts, she does it with positivity, a fun spirit, and humor that is relatable to everyone. We're thankful for April!"

Dody Hansen, South Eugene High School

"Dody's long-term commitment to supporting theater and theater students has made a difference for South Eugene Theater. In a time of substantial disruption with the performing arts due to the pandemic, her presence has provided continuity and expertise that have helped support students and staff."

Laura Lee, Monroe Middle School

"'If there is anything you ever need, please let me know' is the most common thing we hear from Laura. This summarizes her heart for people and our community as a whole. As a parent volunteer, she has gone above and beyond to serve our students and staff. She does it with joy, enthusiasm and sincerity. We're so thankful for Laura!"

Megan MacDonald, Willagillespie Elementary School

"Megan, our PTO president for more than 3 years, has always shown an incredible sense of dedication to enriching the school experience for our students. She is creative in her efforts to fundraise for everything from field trips to playground upgrades. She is a talented planner of events and has worked hard to engage different members of our community to become involved with our school. She is always cheerfully eager to help with anything we need an extra hand with around school."

Monique Offet, Eugene Education Options

"Monique primarily helps our students from 'priority populations,' many of whom struggle with housing insecurity and whose families may not have finances and the original documents needed to acquire an Oregon identification or permit. She works hard to bring attention to students in our community who may be at risk or may have challenges that keep them from being successful. She is tireless in her pursuits to help our community address these challenges and better support our kids."

Franki Ortega, McCornack Elementary School

"Franki is a volunteer extraordinaire! While she initially began her service with a focus on her grandson, she has had an extremely strong and loving impact on many more students. She has high expectations and the compassion to help students meet their goals and individual levels of success. She has gotten to know our students very well and makes them all feel cared for and special. She celebrates their successes, steps in to comfort when they need it, and makes those she works with feel seen and heard."

Judy Salisbury, Monroe Middle School

"Judy brings teamwork, positivity and competency to every job she assists. She has been volunteering for many years in 4J libraries and has also helped in the Monroe front office when documents need to be mailed out. She is a shining example of a selfless, hardworking team player who exceeds all expectations when it comes to offering volunteer help."

Becky Scott, Chinese Immersion Elementary School & Kennedy Middle School

"Becky has answered the call and has come in every Tuesday for the last five months to label and prep student COVID-19 saliva tests for both Chinese Immersion Elementary School and Kennedy Middle School. She faithfully supports both schools in a professional and efficient manner."

Bruce Steinmetz, Student Wellness & School Safety Department

"With unwavering commitment and kindness, Bruce has helped middle school students in every school learn to navigate their neighborhood through Safe Routes to School bike safety classes, and has helped teach hundreds of young students the life skill of riding a bike. He offers a powerful example about how one can live a life of daily adventure through active transportation, showing up by bike to every volunteer session and encouraging and inspiring students by example and through discussion about the fun and independence to be had on two wheels."

Brandon Tirrill, Monroe Middle School

"Brandon has a heart of gold and cares deeply about the people of this community. He is always willing to serve in any capacity as our food pantry volunteer. Whether loading food, transporting food, housing food or recruiting volunteers, he always did it with the best of intent; that is, to ensure that the basic needs of others were being met."

Mary Walston, Adams Elementary School & Eugene School Board

"Through volunteering in school cafeterias, Mary ensures all students have access to healthy meals. Her dedication to student needs and support for the school community is unsurpassed. Her perspective on student and staff experience deepens her understanding of what schools need from leadership and it is reflected in her unwavering support for the district."

Kristin White, Monroe Middle School

"Her energy, positivity, creativity, and commitment are contagious. She has such a heart for people! At every meeting, whether via Zoom or at Starbucks to discuss the food pantry she helped start, it was always about stories of families in need. Her heart is always in the right place when it comes to supporting families and finding any and every way to help them."

Teachers & Licensed Specialists

Mary Adams, *Math Teacher, Arts & Technology Academy*

"Mary is sensitive to the different learning styles of her students. She supports students with disabilities in a kind and courteous manner that helps students reach their potential. She will support students by being flexible, always respectful and kind to them when the students are exhibiting unexpected behavior in her class."

Amy Anderson, *Kindergarten Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Amy Anderson, an Awbrey Park alum, is a truly dedicated and effective teacher, who loves teaching kindergarten at Awbrey Park Elementary School. Her students know that she not only wants to help them to "grow their brains", but become caring and kind members of our school community."

Jessica Anderson, *First Grade Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"My student was having trouble with friends at recess. She and her playmates would get along and play one day, and then fight and be rude to each other the next day. Miss Jessica called me, kept me in the loop, and connected me with the school counselor. She's a wonderful teacher for my daughter, and I'm so thankful for our ongoing communication. We're on the same team, and I'm thankful for her as part of my daughter's journey, and part of my journey as well."

Lee Baker, *Counselor, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Lee is a calm, kind, and confident middle school counselor. He possesses innate intuition about students and watches and listens carefully to ascertain need. He has multiple ways in which he presents and gains information from students, and they trust him inherently as a result. Lee does the work of three school counselors when his job is actually solo. His energy and vivacious spirit drive the 'fun factor' in middle school and we cannot imagine a better teammate to be with."

Meredith Baker, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Buena Vista Elementary School*

"Maestra Baker's flexibility and creativity are unmatched. She leads her classes with empathy, intelligence, and purpose. I'm sure switching to 4th grade this year was a difficult transition for her, but she has shown just how brilliant she is by creating meaningful learning goals and experiences for these students. Teaching during a pandemic has created many different levels of needs for 4J students, and Maestra Baker has approached the problem solving that is new to her job with enthusiasm, patience and an incredible level of understanding."

Leah Barrera, *First Grade Teacher, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Maestra Barrera has unstoppable positive energy. She has shown such incredible teaching skills. It's my daughter's first year learning Spanish, and her accent is way better than mine. Maestra Barrera has shown up this whole year full of positivity, energy, and initiative, while many of us feel exhausted and dragging after 2 years of a pandemic. She is a gem and we are lucky to have her as our teacher."

Misty Bisby, *Language Arts Teacher, Madison Middle School*

"Mrs. Bisby is an amazing teacher and always helps students when in need. She helps me with my language arts homework and is very nice towards me and is helpful to other students AND staff as well."

Christopher Boone, *Band Teacher, Cal Young Middle School*

"Chris Boone has had the difficult job of inspiring students in music class while in a pandemic. Online, this meant finding creative outlets to encourage musical growth. In person, this meant figuring out safety and navigating mask use. Despite all of the surreal challenges that we have faced in the last year, Mr. Boone created a haven of support and connection through music, and continues to be both authentic and optimistic when speaking with his students. Because of his engagement, empathy and hard work, students of the COVID era will feel like they lost a little less."

Julie Bounds, *Band Director, Sheldon High School*

"Ms. Bounds goes above and beyond to help her students reach for the stars, creating an exciting and fun learning environment. Her love of music gets us excited to learn and grow as musicians, and she has built such a wonderful community to be a part of. Additionally, she has made beneficial contributions to the broader community that have made a big difference to performing arts and other important issues around us. She makes everyone feel like they have a place of belonging at school, and it is really special to have that."

Alison Bumstead, *Second Grade Teacher, Gilham Elementary School*

"Mrs. Bumstead is friendly and so patient with the students in her class. She's very passionate about her job, and it truly shows in her everyday tasks and interactions with her students. She communicates very well, and I feel like my son is safe with her and cared for."

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

"Catlin has helped numerous students graduate with flying colors. He knows how to joke around and have fun, but he still gets students to get their work done. Countless students come back to visit him and thank him for everything he's done. Catlin is the kind of man who will help you ace your math test, make you laugh so hard you have to use the bathroom, and talk you out of all your stress—all within a 70-minute class period."

Lexy Chipman, *First Grade Teacher, K-5 Connect*

"I know many people were worried that kids would fall behind in remote school, but we had a great experience with Ms. Chipman. She led a class of first graders through remote school with endless positivity, encouragement, and understanding. She was engaged with the class, provided captivating forms of instruction, and she was a strong but warm influence in her remote classroom. She provided instructive feedback and sought ways to pinpoint the students' needs. Her classroom was fun, friendly, and fundamental."

Elisabeth Cobb, *First Grade Teacher, Holt Elementary School*

"Miss Cobb has helped our son through this very awkward first year of in-person school as a first grader to thrive more than he ever has before. She has guided him in ways that are specific to his learning style, building up his confidence and making him successful and proud of what he can accomplish. She's provided him with tools and techniques for calming and focus as well as a safe ear to communicate his needs and frustrations."

Keri Cockram, *Math Teacher, Cal Young Middle School*

"Keri Cockram is a fantastic teacher and colleague. She has a rare combination of warmth, candidness and professionalism, which make her a truly outstanding educator. She mentors, she problem solves, and she uses her passion and creativity to help kids grow. She knows how to build relationships without getting taken advantage of by wily middle schoolers. She is constantly connecting with families with whom she has built relationships outside of the school building. Keri is truly a master teacher."

Adrienne Colaizzi, *Second Grade Teacher, Eugene Online Academy*

"Every single morning and afternoon, Miss Colaizzi appeared with a warm heart, bright eyes and a strong presence centered around emotional and educational nourishment. She's always consistent and promotes a routine that children crave. Her time is their time and each lesson was taught in a rare style that not only reached the class as a whole but also as individuals. This model way of recruiting everyone to help strengthen the classroom bond and build a rich community of compassionate and helpful students was amazing to watch."

Imelda Cortez, *Spanish Language Arts Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Ms. Cortez helps students when she notices that they are struggling with their assignments and she treats all her students with kindness. She helped me to do my work and made it fun. I ended up passing her classes because of her help! She's an amazing teacher who cares about her students a lot. She deserves everything and has been so kind."

Courtney Dearing, *Language Arts Teacher, Eugene International High School at Churchill*

"Courtney has gone above and beyond to create community throughout the pandemic for her students. She has been a constant source of strength and positivity during a very difficult two years. Courtney delivers engaging, high quality instruction that is always relevant and meaningful. She motivates her students and gives them space to discuss current issues, frustrations, worries, and has been there to support her students through the ups and downs of attending high school through a pandemic. Courtney champions her students to strive for excellence and she leads with kindness and compassion."

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

"Kim is a dedicated educator, always searching for a better way to give her students a 'better day.' She connects with staff, parents and coworkers in meaningful ways and strives to ensure 'her kids' are 'our kids' within the school community. Kim models patience and care to her staff as a natural part of her role as an educator, showing how to build relationships with children and colleagues while mentoring other educators. We are fortunate to have Kim on Team 4J!"

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

"Chris does an exceptional job with the music program at South. He has been inspirational to his students and very encouraging and supportive. I drive my son and another singer to school every morning for Dorians and listen to them talk about how much they appreciate Chris and how much they miss him when he's absent."

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

"Brynne exhibits an amazing whole child approach to teaching. My child's attitude towards school and learning has grown in an exponential manner since joining Brynne's classroom. Social, emotional and academic skills are advancing thanks to Brynne's proactive, patient and supportive approach. Longstanding struggles are being overcome, and my child's self-esteem related to learning is increasing every day!"

Taylor Eldridge, *Life Skills Teacher, Gilham Elementary School*

"Taylor is the most extraordinary, dedicated, passionate and resilient teacher I have ever met. You need a unique set of skills to be a Life Skills teacher, and Taylor embodies those special characteristics that make her students successful, included, and feeling loved and supported every day. I aspire to be more like her, and she encourages me to be the best teacher I can be, too."

Dani Emrick, *Counselor, Howard Elementary School*

"With the heart and soul of a saint, 'Ms. Dani' began her first year as a counselor in a time of overwhelming need, but she has managed to touch the lives of nearly every student, family and staff member with her supportive and non-judgmental kindness. She has a core understanding of how to connect guide and support, with love, a list of resources— and when warranted —a Disco Dancing Cat."

Tim Everett, *Language Arts & Social Studies Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

Mr. Everett goes above and beyond to help kids feel comfortable being themselves, regardless of which box they do or don't fit in, in the LGBTQIA spectrum. Mr. Everett facilitates an amazing environment of inclusivity and acceptance in the Kelly Middle School Gender Sexuality Alliance.

Leah Fann, *Art Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Mrs. Fann is the best kind of teacher: nice, funny and helpful. She keeps her sense of humor in class but is always striving for her students to do their best, offering suggestions for them to improve their art while also inspiring them to fully draw upon their creativity and talents."

Eric Freeman, *Third Grade Teacher, Camas Ridge Elementary School*

"Eric has built strong relationships with all students in his classroom and makes his students fall in love with learning. Not only does he teach reading and writing, but also empathy, humor, and kindness. His class is a family that learns how to take care of each other and respect each other's differences. My son is very lucky to have a positive male role model as his teacher. Eric has given my son opportunities to try new things and push the boundaries of his learning."

Allison Frost, *Second Grade Teacher, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Allison embodies the principles of conscious discipline at the core of all of her curriculum lessons and class projects. Allison's superpower as a teacher is establishing a strong "class family" and creating mindsets of "I can do hard things and I can do them well." Her class family of students knows kindness, equity, positivity, work ethic, perseverance, and teamwork. These skills come at a pivotal time for these young souls after the hardships of the pandemic. Step inside her classroom and you'll be in awe."

Dante Fumagalli, *Special Education Teacher, Spencer Butte Middle School*

"Dante Fumagalli has handled the challenge of returning from distance learning with patience and positivity, even when things are extremely difficult. Dante has built a special education program where students feel heard, safe, supported, and respected. He has shown me during his first year of teaching that he is going to be an amazing teacher for many years to come. His students come to him because they trust and respect him and, as an educator, that goes a long way."

Kellyclare Gardner, *Teacher on Special Assignment, Instructional Services Department*

"While teaching at ATA, Kellyclare created numerous technology-based video lessons enabling students to work at their own pace or catch up if they missed school. This approach ensured that every student got the most out of Kellycare's classes, and enabled her to spend more time addressing individual student needs as they work through the material. It also culminated in her current role as a teacher on special assignment where she continues to support students and staff, whether participating from home or in the classroom."

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

"Katie's Comprehensive Learning Center classroom is a place of love and acceptance for those students not always understood. Along with academic and social skills instruction, Katie provides access to the arts: helping students find their creative 'niches,' whether it's an out-of-the-ordinary-looking hedgehog or a Lego creation built with engineering finesse."

Kristen Gianforti, *Student Success Coordinator, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"Kristen Gianforti is not only the student success coordinator at Awbrey Park, she is a leader of the staff as well. We turn to Kristen when we need help with anything and everything. Without Kristen, I don't think Awbrey Park would run as smoothly as it does. She is such an important part of our school and the kids adore Ms. G, as they call her. She makes Awbrey Park a really special place for the students and staff."

Laura Goudy, *Language Arts & Social Studies Teacher, Cal Young Middle School*

"Empathy, patience, creativity, and flexibility—these are the qualities that make Ms. Goudy an outstanding choice for a 2022 ACE award. Over the last two years, I have had the privilege of watching Ms. Goudy become an impactful force at Cal Young Middle School. Her professionalism, respect, and love for her students create an environment that fosters student success and inspires all to work to the best of their abilities."

Erica Goulding, *Special Education Teacher, Edgewood Elementary School*

"Ms. G has always been patient and kind with my son, who can be difficult at times. She always goes above and beyond to help him improve and encourage him in ways that he understands. She has very clear and timely communication with me, and I feel comfortable reaching out any time. I'm so glad she is such a big part of the team helping my son at school."

Rebecca Gourgey, *Special Education Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Rebecca is an exceptional educator that our school community could not live without. She spends countless hours working with students of all abilities and cares deeply about each one. I think what truly sets Rebecca apart is her ability to push our students to achieve things they didn't believe that they had in them. I've seen her do it countless times, and it never stops being inspiring."

Jenny Groshong, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Jenny Groshong's dedication to inclusion for all students has been life changing for our daughter. Her thoughtfulness, devotion and openness has created a classroom environment where all students are encouraged to be themselves and see the similarities between them instead of the differences. Although our daughter does not speak and uses a wheelchair, Jenny has never placed limits on her ability to engage with her fourth-grade peers. She encourages opportunities for inclusion and praises all of her students for their acts of compassion, understanding and friendship."

Dave Hancock, *Athletic Director, South Eugene High School*

"Dave has devoted innumerable hours to supporting South Eugene athletics in his role as athletic director and head basketball coach. He has weathered extensive challenges brought on by the pandemic and has provided the continuity, optimism, experience and dedication to help athletes, coaches and families make the best of challenging circumstances. His years of commitment to South Eugene athletics and to supporting students in building skills and character are noteworthy and commendable."

Laura Harris, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Edison Elementary School*

Laura Harris is an amazing teacher. She shows so much patience, resilience and passion in her position. She inspires her students to keep trying, gets down on their level to communicate and engages in conversations with students about their interests. Laura truly cares about her students and their well-being inside the classroom, and out. She is encouraging, inspiring, a joy to be around. She even made me, a parent, excited about school again. It shows how much she enjoys her job.

Chad Heidtke, *Science Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School*

"Mr. Heidtke is an amazing teacher who can hold his students' attention and motivate them with inspirational words. He also makes his classes fun. Plus, he's got a pretty good beard."

Kelsey Hicks, *Special Education Teacher, Holt Elementary School*

"We moved here with our autistic son in December of 2020, in the middle of the pandemic. Kelsey immediately put us at ease. She has always made our son feel comfortable, giving him space to work and draw in her classroom. She has succeeded where other educators have not been able to. Kelsey puts our child's well-being on the same level as their education and understands the importance of nurturing both."

Christina Hinton, *Math & AVID Teacher, Madison Middle School*

"Mrs. Hinton is always there for her students! She understands nobody is perfect, and she loves all her students for who they are. She has always encouraged us and brought joy because of her outstanding kindness and love that she gives everybody."

Christie Hoogendoorn, *First Grade Teacher, K-5 Connect*

"Teaching via Zoom is a challenge for anyone, but Ms. Christie does not let the physical distance of teaching remotely stop her from getting to know and building a connection with each and every one of her students. She shows a clear knowledge of each student's academic needs, as well as their social and emotional needs. She is a great teacher of the core subjects, but her greatest strength is teaching life lessons in positivity, resilience, kindness, empathy and self-confidence."

Kyle Hook, *Math Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Mr. Hook helped me when I was in his digital film class. He understood that I didn't have time for some of the projects and he compromised with me and had me do a different project. He is an amazing person who has gone out of his way to help me and other people. He is willing to listen and compromise."

Cate Huang, *Kindergarten Teacher, Camas Ridge Elementary School*

"Ms Cate has done a wonderful job of fostering a love of learning and reading in our kindergartener while also balancing the traditional learning with plenty of outside time, as well. My daughter wakes up excited to go to school and comes home fulfilled mentally and socially, and always shares about 'choice time,' when the children are allowed to work on projects of their own interests. Ms Cate is a caring, motivated, energetic teacher who encourages learning at every corner."

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

"Ms. Hulse challenged my son to participate in the Oregon Battle of the Books this year. He has read more this year than in previous years and has found new authors and subjects he has a strong interest in. She also has given him special responsibilities and allowed him to mentor some of his peers, which has brought him joy in his classroom. He feels he is a needed, important part of his community, and he can't wait to go to school every day."

Lisa Iacovetta, *Social Studies/AVID Teacher, Churchill High School*

"Every week, and nearly every day, students come to Lisa for not just academic, but social and emotional learning support, as well. She makes a clear and visible difference in the lives of her students. Her experience with the school has made her a de facto leader in our class planning and coordination. Additionally, her natural nurturing nature and experience teaching SEL and AVID has made her invaluable in designing the humanities curriculum."

Melissa Ivan, *Language Arts & Social Studies Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"She moved from sixth to seventh grade this year and is doing an excellent job collaborating with her team. It's common to see her next door working closely with others to ensure students are getting the best learning experience possible through content, curriculum and relationships. She always places students' needs first through her interactions, classroom setup, and how she incorporates mindfulness into her daily routines."

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

"Maestro Johnson is a teacher to all at Buena Vista, and we see him everywhere, even at drop-off and pick-up. He regularly attends PTO meetings to share the teacher perspective and brings back ideas for connection and engagement—particularly with the behavioral support program—to the teachers. Everyone looks forward to music class with Maestro Johnson. He is funny and creative and his engaging style makes us want to lift our voices and sing."

Tessa Karbum, *Science Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Tessa's amazing and makes me enjoy school but still stay focused. At the beginning of the year, I had bad grades and was skipping class, but once I came for a couple classes I realized that she's my favorite teacher. Now I have good grades and go to class."

Heather Kliever, *Language Arts Teacher, Madison Middle School*

"She's an amazing part of the community. She listens, helps, and makes us aware of important things. She respects everyone and makes sure we feel safe. She loves acting in student groups and even encourages students to think of their own clubs and groups."

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

"Ms. Kreider compiled an entire 'school at home!' package after my child contracted COVID. It had all materials needed, and even had encouraging notes tucked within the package. My child felt so very valued. And Ms. Kreider treats all the kids this way. I don't know how she does it or has time to do things of this nature. It is far beyond any expectation I could have had."

Sarah Lacey, *Title I Coordinator, Edison Elementary School*

"Sarah has been tirelessly advocating for individualized instruction for struggling readers. She is deeply connected with her students and her students have an amazing respect for her. She handles children with behavioral issues as well as typical learners. Her dedication is truly admirable. She doesn't stop, she doesn't give up. If a struggling reader doesn't respond to an intervention program, she tries a different one. She is truly dedicated to helping kids learn how to read no matter what their obstacles might be!"

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

"Ms. Lamb has been a blessing at Howard Elementary School, specifically for the Comprehensive Learning Center program. She has dedicated many years to helping students reach their highest potential and pushing her colleagues to participate in inclusionary practices. From Day One as a special education teacher, Linda has embraced the unique world of special education. We have seen a lot over the years, and she has taken it all in stride with love and laughter."

Yvette Landrum, *Special Education Teacher, Gilham Elementary School*

"Yvette is a wealth of knowledge, wisdom and support for everyone in our school community. She finds joy and purpose in the work that she does, and seems happiest when she is helping students grow and learn. Yvette is a steady, calm, and fierce cheerleader for students that need consistency, encouragement, and a champion who believes they can do anything they put their mind to. We are all better for having the privilege of working with and learning from Yvette."

Michael Leahy, *Counselor, South Eugene High School*

"With Michael, students feel heard, seen and not judged. He equally supports the straight A students with Ivy league goals, to the struggling students with goals of just surviving day to day. I have witnessed him guide students from a feeling of hopelessness to feeling proud of their accomplishments and turning things around. Michael communicates effortlessly with students, their families, and staff."

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

"Richard has been an inspirational leader for both my children. He gave them the gift of self confidence at the time they needed it the most. My son was extremely shy when he arrived in middle school and Richard's classes helped transform him into a self confident young man. My daughter was having a hard time with online school, but with Richard's support and confidence she exceeded what she thought she was capable of in his talent club. The middle school experience for my children would have been very different without Richard and I am forever grateful for his influence on my kids."

Ricardo Llamas, *Third Grade Teacher, Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School*

"Maestro Llamas inspires kids to be their very best. He is creating an environment where kids feel seen and heard, where all different personalities and learning styles are not only accepted but embraced. This environment is a safe space where kids feel empowered to be themselves instead of being frustrated that they aren't fitting the standard mold of how a 'good student' should behave. Maestro Llamas provides a space where learning is exciting, not a chore to be suffered through."

Sylvie Lovendahl, *Spanish Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"Mrs. Lovendahl is an outstanding educator who is committed to the Spanish Immersion education pathway for her students. She is a firm believer in the value of a well-rounded education that a bilingual education provides. She is a product of the immersion program that she now gives back to and has continued to go above and beyond to meet the needs of her students, families, and the greater community at large."

Kelsy Loyd, *Music Teacher, Spring Creek Elementary School*

"Without hesitation, Kelsy does an amazing job at creating engaging lessons that are accessible to all students in the school regardless of their abilities. I especially appreciate her effort in communicating with Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing staff and interpreters in providing accessible music lessons to the DHH students within our school. All in all, she is wonderful."

Alison Machado, *Science Teacher, Madison Middle School*

"Mrs. Machado is a teacher who always puts students first. She is able to individualize each student's learning experience to make it their own. Students can connect with the material through her broad knowledge of instructional practices and her ability to engage each of her students. She is a fantastic teacher leader. Teachers can seek her advice and know that she will not only have their best interest in mind, but also their students."

Shirley Madathil Lathrop, *Counselor, South Eugene High School*

"Shirley has been doing a stunning job in easily the most difficult year for freshmen to be entering high school in recent history. She has a giant heart for kids and is highly empathetic; however, she helps students do what they need to do, not always what they want to do. With Shirley's ability to empathize with these students' struggles, she has been able to help students work through some of the in-person school anxiety they have been experiencing and to also remove barriers for students who have been struggling."

Naoko Manabe, *Second Grade Teacher, Yujin Gakuen Japanese Elementary School*

"Naoko has been a Japanese language educational assistant since 2016. I have watched her grow in her confidence and skill. The students love her patient, calm and kind demeanor. When we were left scrambling to find new second-grade teachers, Naoko quickly got her substitute teaching paperwork submitted and stepped in as a classroom teacher. Her sense of duty to the students of YG qualifies her for an ACE Award."

Maddy Marvin, *Health Teacher, Madison Middle School*

"She is nice to everyone and very empathetic. At the beginning of the year she said she would not give us homework. She kept her word and never gave us homework!"

Maricarmen McFadden, *First Grade Teacher, River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School*

"Maestra McFadden is deserving of this award because she is the hardest working person I know. We have spent countless hours on the weekends and weekdays discussing, organizing and preparing materials for students. If you were to see her in action you would think being a teacher is easy. But when you talk to her you realize how much skill and preparation it takes to be as effective as she is."

Lallie McKenzie, *Engineering Technology CTE Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Lallie ignited a spark in my daughter. She provided a safe space for my daughter to recognize her skills and talents in math/science where she previously had no confidence. My daughter had given up on school despite doing OK, but her first class with Lallie was a game changer—she felt seen and had a space to be herself to learn. Thanks to Lallie, my student believes she can learn, has increased her goals for future education, and is excited by the prospect of her future."

Brady Metzger, *Science Teacher, Kennedy Middle School*

"Mr. Metzger is positive, funny and enthusiastic, and he always makes sure that we understand what's happening. He creates a positive environment by creating strong bonds with students and helping us if we need it. He works so hard to give us our education and always lightens the mood. Wherever he goes just feels more welcoming."

Jason Miller, *Language Arts & Social Studies Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Mr. Miller guides students to succeed by challenging them with timely and relevant assignments to teach his social studies and English Language Arts curriculum. My child enjoys working on the assignments even when they are difficult because they interest them. Mr. Miller is a positive member of the school community by teaching an AVID class and facilitating those students, creating a bonded cohort that supports each other in being successful at school."

Kelsey Moore, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Willagillespie Elementary School*

"Kelsey has created a relaxed, open and inclusive environment in her classroom where students feel safe not only to learn but to learn to grow as young humans. She has built trust and communication with her students, and together they have created a positive community which allows all students to thrive. Kelsey is a veteran teacher and a leader in the building, supportive of her teacher peers and helping to build our school culture in a positive manner."

Courtney Morris, *Third Grade Teacher, Edgewood Elementary School*

"Courtney Morris taught my kiddo for all of second grade on Zoom, and now third grade in person (and we wish he could continue through fourth grade too!) Courtney makes school a bright spot in these hard pandemic years, and he does so with deep connection to his students, and a deep appreciation for their personhood and interests. He is a warm, kind individual who has a great sense of humor and genuinely seems to enjoy teaching!"

Megan Murphy, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Adams Elementary School*

"Megan goes above and beyond to help her fourth grade team, and each and every one of her students. She has so much on her plate with two new teachers and a student teacher on her team, all while coaching swim team and managing a classroom. She does it all with grace and patience. She truly cares about all students, even those not in her class."

Jesus Narvaez Santiago, *Social Studies Teacher, North Eugene High School*

"Better known as Mr. Chuy to the North community, Jesus brings his knowledge of ethnic studies, equity, race and inclusion to his classes. He is always reminding students that they are capable and strong leaders, and that—although he is the teacher—they are also teaching him every day. Mr. Chuy is always there for students and staff by being available and present when he is needed. He is always checking in on everyone because he cares deeply about those around him."

Maria Navarrete-Gonzalez, *Math Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Ms. Navarrete-Gonzalez is an amazing teacher who taught my child to have the confidence to take on math problems without anxiety. She did this during the 2020-21 school year with all online learning. She believes all kids can learn and understand math, and her confidence in her students' abilities is truly contagious. She showed up for endless office hours and special question sessions and was always available for follow-up to be sure kids who wanted to understand the material had every opportunity humanly possible."

Gene Newbold, *Art Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"Mr. Newbold is a passionate educator who has served students as an elementary educator, a middle school language arts & social studies teacher, and now as an art teacher. He is an artist, musician and talented teacher. Mr. Newbold brought a strong performing arts background to Monroe, fulfilling a need for our school in a big way. He strives to make a difference in the lives of students through care, connection and providing enriching experiences that are so important at the middle school level!"

Margarita O'Brien, *First Grade Teacher, River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School*

"Ms. O'Brien is a wonderful teacher who, despite having a large class, keeps her young kids focused and learning. My daughter is learning so much and has so much respect for her teacher. Thank you!"

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

"Karen Olsen is known by her colleagues and students for her patience, kindness, and dedication to history, travel, and the arts. Over the past four decades, she has spent long hours both in and out of the classroom supporting students in theater, acting as director and producer for school musicals that bring students and families from elementary to college together."

Amy Page, *District Librarian, Instructional Services Department*

"Amy Page was reading to students during a live virtual field trip at a local farm when an alpaca appeared suddenly and bumped up against her. Rather than get flustered, Amy gave the alpaca a quick, sweet acknowledgement and immediately returned to reading her story. Amy wouldn't let a renegade farm animal disturb her literacy efforts and her obvious care for her students' time and energy. She brings that same attitude to her job: professional, smooth and unflustered, even when overseeing 32 school libraries that all have different funding, staffing and resources."

Dave Pete, *Physical Education Teacher, Kelly Middle School*

"Mr. Pete is a wonderful teacher who ensures all his students are engaged and participating. All his activities are fun, especially badminton, and he is open to student feedback on what we should do in his class. After school every day he lets us hang out in the gym with him."

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

"Venus is the brightest planet in the night sky, and Venus the teacher is full of that same vibrance, sharing her shiny, optimistic outlook with staff and students even on the darkest of days during staff shortages, the pandemic and other hurdles thrown in her path."

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

"Ms. Reich is a great educator and role model to all students who is always working to ensure they reach for their full potential. She is kind-hearted, super knowledgeable and is always wanting the kids to fulfill their needs before her own."

Joe Renaud, *Special Education Teacher, Sheldon High School*

"Joe's individual understanding of each of his students, as well as his own knowledge, humor, and incredible expertise on many levels, ensures that students will feel successful and safe regardless of their challenges. Joe continually goes far beyond expectation and communicates beautifully with parents, which helps us all breathe a little better. My boys with autism will get through public high school, and we will have Joe to thank for it!"

Sara Roadman, *First Grade Teacher, Charlemagne French Immersion Elementary School*

"When my daughter was alone at lunch, Mrs. Roadman noticed and sat with her to eat lunch, which had a big impact on my daughter. She is kind and cares deeply about her students. Nominating her is a small act to show this great teacher that we care and appreciate what she does for our kids every day!"

Suzy Rock, *Fifth Grade Teacher, K-5 Connect*

"Mrs. Rock was rock solid! She provided a welcoming remote classroom, and was on top of everything, especially communication. She led the classroom efficiently, with a positive, encouraging demeanor. She knew how to keep my kid engaged and participating, which is an impressive feat in remote instruction. I could tell she spent time really thinking about how to provide math instruction remotely, and was always putting the kids' needs first. Mrs. Rock's classroom was focused, factual, and fun."

Sarah Ruggiero Kirby, *Teacher on Special Assignment, Instructional Services Department*

"Sarah is the district's new Science TOSA (teacher on special assignment) this year and has really stepped up and filled this role in an outstanding way. She supports the district's science staff immensely and helps us to solve problems, both large and small. She's put systems in place for science teachers to share and trade extra materials, which saves us time and the district money. Through her actions, Sarah is helping students succeed by supporting teachers. She is a team player and leader in our district."

Natalie Rush, *French Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Natalie is exceptional. She is skilled, relational, organized, dedicated, and collaborative. I have seldom seen an instructor handle challenges with as much grace and expertise as Natalie has in the classroom."

Haruka Sakurai, *Japanese Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Haruka Sakurai is a phenomenal teacher, helping many students discover the enjoyment of learning no matter how difficult the information may be. Haruka always springs into action when she sees a student's needs not being met, and often encourages students to help each other. She strives to make every lesson energetic, fun, and comprehensible. Her way of teaching and overall class structure has shown me that learning challenging material can be fun, and it sparked my interest in learning and taught me to enjoy the process when it comes to any subject matter."

Amy Samson, *Fourth Grade Teacher, Eugene Online Academy*

"Even with being online, Ms. Samson takes the time to care for each child's needs. She will stay with my daughter after Zoom class and speak to her privately about her concerns or even just to chat one-on-one. Ms. Samson has such a strong bond with her students even though they have never met in person. My daughter loves it!"

Deon Saraceno, *Social Studies & Health Teacher, International High School at Churchill*

"Though my son rarely shares much about his experiences at school, every time Deon's name comes up he would say that he really liked her as a teacher or that he likes her classes. He says that he feels like he is learning something! My son is a tough critic so that really stood out for me. I met her again during a meeting and she struck me as a well-loved teacher among all her students, not just my son."

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

"Ms. Schneider has dedicated her entire career for the past twenty-three years in supporting the dual language immersion program in Eugene. She is intelligent, compassionate, and she loves to teach children from the bottom of her heart. Her sincere dream to support her students in educating them and providing better opportunities for their future are shown in her lively classroom every day."

Zak Scotton, *Special Education Teacher, Churchill High School*

"Zak Scotton is a prime example of what it looks like when a person dedicates themselves to the service of their district, school and students. Zak develops lessons for students who struggle in a traditional educational setting, helping them bridge the gap between their needs and the general education classroom. Zak's kindness and understanding of his students has created a classroom that meets the needs of his kids, creates challenges that develops the necessary skills for students to thrive, and makes sure that every child is respected and cared for."

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

"Mike Seager is a kind and compassionate person and, as a teacher, he is committed to excellence. He is an expert at building relationships with students, and then uses that relationship to help students succeed. The students trust him and respect him because he is such a genuine and caring person. He is committed to helping all staff become better to help the students who struggle with school."

Virginia Seefeld, Math Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School

"Virginia Seefeld is the teacher that everyone wishes they had. She shows respect for her students and meets them where they are, providing the support or challenge they need. She always makes herself available to students and provides the support and extra instruction they need. And with all that, she somehow provides a space that is stress-free and humming with productivity and purpose."

Jennifer Shadwick, Second Grade Teacher, Spring Creek Elementary School

"Ms. Shadwick goes the extra mile every day to ensure every kid in her class is included in a caring classroom community. My student's struggles, both academic and social, immediately began to resolve when he became a part of Ms. Shadwick's amazing classroom community. Her exceptional effort resulted in my student loving his new school. She guides every student to succeed with individualized teaching to meet each student's needs. Ms. Shadwick is a joy to have as a teacher."

Jen Sinclair, Title I Coordinator, Camas Ridge Elementary School

"Jen is a wonderful educator who goes above and beyond to help students, staff and families. She does this in such a positive and caring way. They all see her as an advocate. Jen has many different strategies to help students and teachers succeed. Students are excited to go to her classroom to get support in their reading ability. 9B is the place to be at Camas!"

Magdalena Sloniger, Kindergarten Teacher, Buena Vista Elementary School

"Maestra Sloniger is a gem! Her superpower is engaging a room full of kindergartners with a wide variety of strengths and needs. She is a gentle powerhouse who is able to draw in her students, build their confidence, and have fun while doing it. She balances strong academics and routines with wacky, quirky and loving care."

Clair Smith, Counselor, Sheldon High School

"Clair meets every situation with enthusiasm and sincere kindness. She is the prime example of a public servant to this school and community. Her genuine positivity and attitude has brought so much light into Sheldon. Our students and school are so lucky to have her."

James Squires, Third Grade Teacher, Gilham Elementary School

"Mr. Squires is an incredibly talented teacher. He takes the time to routinely communicate with families and genuinely cares about each and every child in his classroom. He happily offers up his own personal time to help a kiddo via Zoom in the evening. He makes adjustments if someone in his class is struggling and he makes learning really fun. Mr. Squires is one of a kind and we are so grateful for him this school year."

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

"Michael Stead is a very professional and humorous person. I am so glad to have him as my teacher. Wood shop is the only class I always feel fully engaged in, and it's because of Stead. He has built many strong relationships with kids in such a short amount of time."

Tyler Stubbert, *Social Studies Teacher, Madison Middle School*

"He's funny and nice. I appreciate his jokes and humor."

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

"Kim is committed to making a positive difference for children and families impacted by disabilities and/or trauma. Her classroom is designed to welcome every child, to celebrate the fun of learning, and to promote personal and academic excellence. She works tirelessly to find and/or create whatever her students need to engage in learning and be successful in school. Whether it's working individually with children and families, mentoring new special education teachers, or training aides across the district, Kim raises the level of performance of those with whom she works."

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

"Ms. Suzi is a caring and warm teacher — a 'warm demander.' She brings out the best in her students and makes them excited about learning. Even though parents have not been involved in the school because of COVID-19, she manages to make us feel connected to what's happening in the classroom. I am so grateful my son has such a positive, committed and patient teacher for this unusual school year."

Aaron Thomas, *Language Arts Teacher, North Eugene High School*

"Mr. Thomas saw natural talent in my daughter and taught her (and others) skills that not only have helped her improve in drama class, but also encouraged her to think outside the box, consider others, and build confidence in herself. He also cast a diverse group of drama club members in the school production, and it was obvious that my daughter was not the only student in that group who benefitted from Mr. Thomas' wealth of knowledge and compassion and respect for his students."

Della Thomas, *504 Coordinator, Student Services Department*

"Within the extraordinary group of 4J educators, Della Thomas stands out for her remarkable contributions. She supports teams in every school in the district to create plans of accommodation for many of our most vulnerable students. During the pandemic, she has truly risen to the occasion, bringing intelligence, passion and tireless care to her work and making us all proud to be able to do this work beside her."

Anne Tomlanovich, *Counselor, Madison Middle School*

"Every day, she helps someone out when they need it most. When I was feeling anxious she helped me calm down by talking with me. She helps and talks to people when they need someone to listen to them."

Tamara Torrence, *Math Teacher, South Eugene High School*

"Tamara has devoted extensive time to supporting students in learning math and in building courses that she knows may best serve their needs and interests. She is innovative—creating and teaching one of the first asynchronous cross-district courses 4J has offered. She is particularly dedicated to supporting students who need accommodations to access math instruction, and her dedication and willingness to go the extra mile to support students is well-known among our staff."

Matthew Trent, *Math Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"Mr. Trent embodies how a good teacher continues to fight for their students even when the mountain of obstacles seems insurmountable. Middle school is already so tough, but add in a pandemic, behavioral issues and teen mental health, and the task to keep them engaged and healthy seems impossible. But Mr. Trent is present, engaging, real, and he believes in each kid. He has been such a good teacher to my child, and I'm so thankful she's been able to be in his class."

Stephanie Vineyard, *First Grade Teacher, Awbrey Park Elementary School*

"I feel she is an amazing teacher who goes above and beyond for her students. She always keeps in touch with me about how my son is doing in the classroom. I feel he has learned a lot from her!"

Jasmine Ward, *First Grade Teacher, Howard Elementary School*

"Jasmine is such a joyful teacher, meeting each student where they are with love and enthusiasm for the art of education. She can teach with a traditional curriculum, or by using a Pop It fidget toy — if it gets students to love learning, she'll use it! Her infectious laugh and kind demeanor are what students need during these pandemic times."

David White, *Spanish Immersion Teacher, Monroe Middle School*

"David not only teaches students English Language Arts and social studies, but he does it in Spanish! His ability to teach, translate, contextualize, and support all at the same time is remarkable. He loves learning and teaching, and his students feel it when they are in his classroom. He engages students through their interests and encourages them to not only enjoy learning Spanish, but also the content."

Timothy Wilcox, *Band & Theater Teacher, Madison Middle School*

"Mr. Wilcox is a kind and patient person who lets us learn in a comfortable learning environment where we can trust him to help, if needed. As a student still learning to read sheet music, he has never rushed me into playing my instrument at a level I'm not ready for. He will make sure students are learning at a good pace to get the job done without overworking you."

Jennifer Williams, *Life Skills Teacher, Churchill High School*

"I believe that Jennifer's first priority is to help her students lead productive lives outside of Churchill High School. Whether it's taking field trips to markets, bowling or creating a basketball team, Jennifer shows all of us that patience, love and creating opportunities is all that is needed to support her students in achieving rich, fulfilling lives. She is an example of when pedagogy, passion and love make a place better."

Bobbie Willis, *Journalism, South Eugene High School*

"Bobbie Willis cultivates an atmosphere of student creativity, collaboration, and empowerment in the SEHS journalism program. A trusted mentor to many students, she guides students toward increasing responsibility, hones their skills, and encourages wide-ranging, open discussion of events affecting students' lives. My daughter sees the newspaper class as her home base and safe space at school, and she sees Bobbie herself as someone she can confide in and trust."

Brandeis Zaklan, *Counselor, Gilham Elementary School*

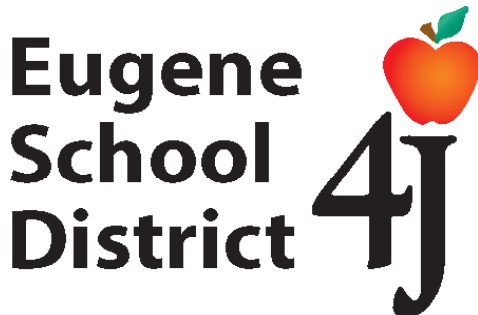
"Brandeis was away from school on a military assignment, and my daughter felt the absence of her friend, her person in a big way. One day, a package from overseas arrived at the door, addressed to both of my kids. They opened it together and found a letter to each of them from her, with a few little tokens. One of those little trinkets still sits on my daughter's bookshelf. That thoughtful gesture, in the midst of what I can only imagine was a stressful time for Ms. Z, meant the world to them."

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

"Lisa has established a connection with our son through being warm and interested in knowing him. Her steady support as a loving grown-up in our child's life is priceless. She has inspired him academically and been a reliable, dedicated and concerned educator with many acts of kindness that have impacted our entire family."

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

Thank you!





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to the ACE Champions.**