



District 279 Foundation

*Investment in Youth
Celebration*

2020

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Chartered in 1991 as a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, District 279 Foundation partners with the school district, parents, students, volunteers, city officials, civic organizations and the business community to support and make a difference in Osseo Area Schools.

Our Mission

Our mission is to support and enhance the district's dedication to all students.

Our Vision

Our vision is to provide learning opportunities for students in Osseo Area Schools by funding programs, projects and other opportunities that are not presently available through the district's budget.

Our Core Value

We believe that there is a moral, social and economic imperative to support student success and equitable student achievement.

District 279 Foundation is honored to celebrate the following people as this year's Award Recipients

Significant Investment in Developing Their Own Talents:

Exhibiting unique expressions of creativity or talent.

Kurtis Banks

Student

Osseo Senior High

Significant Investment in Overcoming Adversity:

Displaying the will and courage to overcome major challenges.

Olivia Hautala

Student

Basswood Elementary

Bai Jassy

Student

Park Center Senior High

Savannah LaCroix

Student

Cedar Island Elementary

Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education:

Showing commitment to education by giving of their time, talents or resources.

Emily Bollinger

Educator

Osseo Area Learning Center

Deanne Carlson

Confidential Support Specialist

Educational Service Center

Kendra Grand

Volunteer

Maple Grove Middle School

Jeanne Heer

Educator

Woodland Elementary

Nola Heruth

Student

Weaver Lake Elementary

Bryan Hovde

Educator

Park Center Senior High

Laurie Johnson

Education Support Professional

Birch Grove Elementary

Bemi Joseph

Educator

Brooklyn Middle School

Kaitlyn Leininger

Educator

Crest View Elementary

Dan Miller

Custodian

Osseo Middle School

Angie Muñoz

Volunteer

Cedar Island Elementary

Bernard Nico

Student & Volunteer

Adult Basic Education

James Oelke

Educator

Fernbrook Elementary

Amy Oelkers

Volunteer

Palmer Lake Elementary

Mona Parmar

Volunteer

Arbor View Early Childhood Center

Cheryl Piotraschke

Educator

Fair Oaks Elementary

Wendy Schulte

Volunteer

Park Brook Elementary

Louise Smith

Volunteer

Elm Creek Elementary

Mary Pat Smith

Nurse

Willow Lane Early Childhood Center

Arlene Strum

Nutrition Services

North View Middle School

Amanda Teachout-Emerson

Education Support Professional

ACHIEVE

Lillie Vail

Educator

Basswood Elementary

Ben Waldhauser

Education Support Professional

Edinbrook Elementary

Sharon Young

Volunteer

Adult Basic Education

District 279 Foundation is honored to celebrate the following people as this year's Award Recipients

Significant Investment in Helping the Community:

Exhibiting involvement and dedication toward the community and its members.

Kayden Simone Cochran	Student	Palmer Lake Elementary
Patricia Ellingson	Volunteer Coordinator	Oak View Elementary
Jessie Hanson	Educator	Rice Lake Elementary
Nichol McGill	Education Support Professional	Zanewood Community School
Donna Peavey	Secretary	Garden City Elementary
Sasha Ramnath	Student	Edinbrook Elementary
Betty and Don Skoglund	Educators	Osseo Area Retired Educators
Anja Smith, Mackenna Sutkowski	Students	Elm Creek Elementary
Bertie Williams	Education Support Professional	Arbor View Early Childhood Center
Savanna Yang	Student	Brooklyn Middle School
Krissy Zimba	District Homeless Liaison	Enrollment Center

Significant Investment in Their Own Learning:

Demonstrating perseverance, love of learning or pursuit of knowledge by study or experience.

E'Mary Lee	Student	North View Middle School
Kelechukwu Nwosu	Student	Oak View Elementary
Howard Ramaley	Student	Maple Grove Senior High
Eldar Sayfullaev, Alina Sayfullaeva	Students	Fernbrook Elementary
Jo'siah Seivers	Student	Birch Grove Elementary
Txujci Thao	Student	Fair Oaks Elementary
Andrea Vaquera-Chavez	Student	Crest View Elementary
Emily Vue	Student	Park Brook Elementary
Jiasheah Vue	Student	Weaver Lake Elementary
Regina Xiong	Student	Zanewood Community School
Lynda Yeah	Student	Osseo Secondary Transition Center

Significant Investment in Modeling for Youth:

Demonstrating through words and actions an example for young people.

Ethel Cooper	Student	Garden City Elementary
Alex Herral	Student	Osseo Middle School
Nathan Hunter	Student	Woodland Elementary
Candice Kararu	Student	Rice Lake Elementary
Ronnie King	Educator	Osseo Senior High
Darwin Kreft	Educator	Maple Grove Senior High
Gwen Krutzig	Educator	Rush Creek Elementary
Jack Kuhn	Student	Rush Creek Elementary
Adrian Sanchez	Student	Osseo Area Learning Center
Heather Sheedy	Student	Maple Grove Middle School

Investment in Youth Celebration

For over 20 years, District 279 Foundation's Investment in Youth celebration has honored students, volunteers, and staff in Osseo Area Schools.

Developing Their Own Talents - Exhibiting unique expressions of creativity or talent.

Overcoming Adversity - Displaying the will and courage to overcome major challenges.

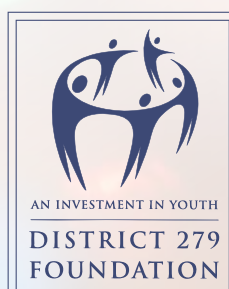
Betterment of Education - Showing commitment to education by giving of their time, talents or resources.

Helping the Community - Exhibiting involvement and dedication toward the community and its members.

Their Own Learning - Demonstrating perseverance, love of learning or pursuit of knowledge by study or experience.

Modeling for Youth - Demonstrating through words and actions an example for young people.

Special thanks to the nominators for sharing the following inspirational descriptions of this year's award recipients. These individuals contribute to our community with confidence, courage and competence. District 279 Foundation is honored to celebrate the following students, staff and volunteers.



Award Recipient Descriptions

ACHIEVE

OSSEO AREA SCHOOLS

ISD 279

Amanda Teachout-Emerson, *Education Support Professional*

Nominator: Andrea McCorkle

Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Amanda is an unsung hero for the Behavior Intervention Team at the Osseo Education Center. She works with both the Achieve program which is a secondary program and the Osseo Secondary Transition Center which is a transition program. She is always available and willing to assist our scholars to make better choices. She keeps a smile on her face even during high stress situations and the scholars feel comfortable with her. She has formed a special bond with each scholar she helps and listens to.

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Adult Basic Education



Community Ed

Adult Basic Education

Bernard Nico, *Student, Volunteer*

Nominator: Mark Waldeland

Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Bernard is college educated from France. When he became a student in the Adult Basic Education English Learning program, he was retired but, his love of learning pushed him to continue bettering himself and his English. Bernard set goals for himself and worked tirelessly to get his adult diploma. When he received his diploma from the state of Minnesota, Bernard did not stop working. He is now a volunteer with Adult Basic Education and works with the English Learning group and the academic math classes. Bernard not only works in the classroom; he also tutors students in order to help them reach their math goals. It has been a joy to watch Bernard continue to succeed and help others succeed as well.

Sharon Young, *Student, Volunteer*

Nominator: Emily Watts

Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Sharon has volunteered in the Adult Basic Education program since 2016, dedicating more than 425 hours of time to the students and staff in the program. She has become an invaluable asset in the Academics Level A classroom, working with students just starting on their academic journeys in reading, grammar and writing. Sharon advocates on behalf of the students and celebrates their progress each day. While some volunteers thrive on the classroom experience, Sharon is a volunteer who can also be found making copies, cutting out materials and as she often says, "doing whatever needs to be done". Sharon is a true part of the Adult Basic Education team!

Arbor View Early Childhood Center



OSSEO AREA SCHOOLS
Community Ed
Early Childhood & Family Education

Mona Parmar, Volunteer
Nominator: Sally Nault-Maurer
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Mona, along with her two children, have been attending Early Childhood & Family Education classes since 2015. During their time in the program, Mona has uplifted staff and families by serving as the Parent Advisory Council program volunteer and sharing her life experience with other families. She has been an integral part of the Parent Advisory Council's work on the annual Spring Social and in outreach efforts in the community. Mona described her leadership style best when she said, "I love being connected to all EC&FE families so that I can make sure they are having a consistent, positive experience like I do." We so appreciate all that Mona has shared of herself with our program.

Bertie Williams, Education Support Professional
Nominator: Elise Ruegsegger
Category: Significant Investment in Helping the Community

Bertie Williams is an exemplary model of dedication to the community. In her 27 years with the district, Bertie has impacted the lives of countless families, children, and staff in the Early Childhood & Family Education program. Bertie's love of children and parents, and her zest for life, brightens lives daily. Her influence reaches beyond the doors of our school building into the lives of the community through her non-profit organization, Supplemental Angles of Community Services. The mission of her organization is to provide essential services and items to families in an effort to embrace community and ultimately end the cycle of generational poverty.

Basswood Elementary



Olivia Hautala, Student
Nominator: Kris Bohr
Category: Significant Investment in Overcoming Adversity

Olivia faces the challenges of childhood cancer, yet comes to school eager to learn and with a positive attitude. She exudes a quiet kindness to all she encounters and strives to do her best in everything she does. Despite having to juggle doctor appointments and on-going treatment, she stays caught up on her work, and even looks for ways she can challenge herself academically. She sets a positive example for all students at Basswood.

Lillie Vail, Educator
Nominator: Al Anderson
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Lillie Vail is a retired Osseo Area teacher who has returned to her teaching roots as a substitute for many Osseo teachers. She has given of her time, resources, and heart to the students and to staff at all the schools where she substitutes. Lillie gives up her personal time to help returning teachers by writing plans and organizing classrooms. Even though Lillie is not a permanent staff member at the schools where she substitutes, she has become an integral part of every school in which she teaches. Her enthusiasm and energy for the school, staff, and students are contagious. Lillie's love for teaching and the special bond she creates wherever she goes is an inspiration.

Birch Grove Elementary



Laurie Johnson, *Education Support Professional*
Nominator: Ronald Salazar
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Ms. Johnson, AKA Queen Johnson is dedicated to her students and co-workers. In the past couple of years, she trained two new team members. She guided them through the technical aspects of their job, as well as, how to navigate the school as an employee, working with other staff members and in some cases with parents as well. She creates her own materials to enhance student learning and supports her scholars to do their best.

Jo'siah Seivers, *Student*
Nominator: Keisha Davis
Category: Significant Investment in Their Own Learning

Jo'siah came to Birch Grove in 3rd grade. He is now in 5th grade. The amount of growth both behaviorally, academically, and in attendance has been very positive. He has become more intentional on his actions during the day: from making it to school on time, asking for help and receiving it, more positive relationships with peers and adults and great effort when it comes to academics. He is conscious of his choices and the outcome they may have on future wants and needs. He sticks to his goals. His integrity and leadership for what is right and just is phenomenal. He is caring and helps younger scholars as well. Best of all, he smiles more!

Brooklyn Middle School



Bemi Joseph, *Educator*
Nominator: Kim Monette
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

It is no secret that teachers have one of the most challenging and critical jobs in our society. Bemi Joseph accepts these challenges with an enthusiasm and passion! She has taken on the obstacles faced by Brooklyn Middle School students with dedication, solely for the betterment of the individual child. Bemi's contagious energy and her innovative ideas have spurred other staff members to get involved with new and existing programs.

Bemi's commitment to the students remains steadfast. She is always encouraging students and staff members to reach their utmost potential for themselves, while they create a better community in which to learn and live.

Savanna Yang, *Student*
Nominator: Elizabeth Johnson
Category: Significant Investment in Helping the Community

Sometimes I will ask my students to name a friend or person whom they trust. Savanna's name is the most frequent answer I receive. She is always the first to volunteer whether as a Guide to Personal Success (GPS) leader, a host to exchange students, an advocate or a friend with good advice. She is a natural problem solver and leader and she makes our school a better place by exemplifying trustworthiness and compassion. She leads by example and others want to follow her good example. The Brooklyn Middle School community has benefitted from her open minded and calm approach to life and her endless willingness to lend a hand.

Cedar Island Elementary



Savannah LaCroix, *Student*

Nominator: Schuyler Deuel

Category: Significant Investment in Overcoming Adversity

Savannah is an amazing girl and student. Even though she lost her mother unexpectedly during her third grade year, she remained a positive student that is always ready to learn. She chooses to continually show compassion and help her peers throughout the school year. And she looks for and finds joy in the people around her each day. We all admire Savannah's strength and courage as she has been a positive contribution to our community and our classrooms. It is without a doubt that she will continue to do well in all of her educational experiences and life in general because of her determination to overcome challenges and to be the best person she can be.

Angie Muñoz, *Volunteer*

Nominator: Barb Lindsay

Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Angie planned and implemented a Hero Run for Cedar Island students this year. She put together a meaningful community-based run by bringing 'every day heros' like fire fighters, police officers and military personnel to cheer on our students. While we were thrilled that our fundraising goal was surpassed, the highlight of this run were the special visitors - it was a wonderful event! Angie has set us up for years of success by creating such a well-planned fun run.

Crest View Elementary



Kaitlyn Leininger, *Educator*

Nominator: Heather Beavens

Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

You hear about teachers who are the one in a million. If you are lucky you have had one in your lifetime. Crest View is lucky to have Kaitlyn Leininger. She shows dedication and commitment to the Crest View community with her time, talents and resources. Creativity flows from her. She takes her own time to design, create and make hats, shirts and other projects for her students which inspire learning. Her creativity flows over to staff as well with her input in our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports team, Family Engagement committee as well as organizing and leading the Crest View's Girls on the Run group. Kaitlyn is always working hard for the success of her own students and all of the students at Crest View. We are so lucky to have her as part of the Crest View community.

Andrea Vaquera-Chavez, *Student*

Nominator: Nancy Anderson

Category: Significant Investment in Their Own Learning

As a fifth grader at Crest View Elementary, Andrea is a hardworker and displays perseverance everyday. A student since pre-K, she has been involved in many activities including Cardinal Kids, lego club, skiing, school patrol team and camp. Andrea and her family attend many of the community events at school. Andrea is quiet, but mighty with her strength and determination. Andrea is always willing to help others when needed. It has been a pleasure to have worked with and watched Andrea grow and become a leader to her peers and teachers.

Edinbrook Elementary



Sasha Ramnath, *Student*
Nominator: Sarah McCarthy
Category: Significant Investment in Helping the Community

Sasha is a highly motivated and positive minded student, always looking for ways to help others before she helps herself. She is actively involved in Student Council, contributing time to help coordinate, plan, and execute events, collections, and fun school activities. Always looking for ways to improve her school community, Sasha speaks with peers and contributes new ideas to the Student Council for consideration. She organizes her time and manages a large amount of responsibility while still working on being a successful student in class.

Ben Waldhauser, *Education Support Professional*
Nominator: Mike Harvey
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Mr. Waldhauser is known at Edinbrook Elementary as a caring, relational, and positive role model. He leads Edinbrook’s Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports work instituting intentional relationship driven interventions on a daily basis. He also leads our Tier 2 Interventions team and manages our School-wide Information System behavior data. Mr. Waldhauser has solid relationships with our parents and uses communication to help our students develop into responsible, successful peers. He continually donates his personal time to attend school events and goes above and beyond to be a familiar friendly face for all staff and students at our school. Edinbrook Elementary is grateful to have the services of Mr. Waldhauser.

Educational Service Center

OSSEO AREA SCHOOLS
ISD 279

Deanne Carlson, *Confidential Support Specialist*
Nominator: Laurel Anderson
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Deanne has been an amazing asset to our district in her eleven-year tenure as the Substitute and Attendance Specialist in Osseo Area Schools. She has been very important to the success of students and staff by assisting with substitutes and classroom coverage across our system on a daily basis. Staff characterize Deanne as an incredibly valuable employee who is positive, patient, resourceful, calm, professional, and willing to help in any way that she can. One staff member stated, “Deanne is the MOST helpful person I know. She always answers the phone with a smile even though I know she is terribly busy; she still makes time to help you.” Our schools would not function without the work and support that Deanne provides!

2018 Investment in Youth Award Recipients



Elm Creek Elementary



Louise Smith, *Volunteer*
Nominator: Moneque Downs, Beth Ruud, Gloria Collova, Melissa Uecker
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Louise or Wheezy, as the kids call her, is a kind, warm, gentle soul who touches the lives of many children in the classroom. She volunteers 2-3 times a week in our 1st and 2nd grade classrooms helping the students gain more confidence and understanding of their reading and math skills. She helps them read stories and listens to them as they seek more individual attention. Wheezy also is one of our coordinators for our Art Adventures curriculum every year. Her presentations in the classrooms to give the students a more in-depth learning of the significance of certain art pieces. Wheezy helps spread kindness crocheting hundreds of little pocket hearts out of yarn to give out during our Kindness Challenge during the month of February at Elm Creek. Wheezy is dedicated to helping our children at Elm Creek and spreads kindness and cheer wherever she goes. Thank you Wheezy for all you do for us. You are AWESOME!

Anja Smith and Mackenna Sutkowski, *Students*
Nominator: Randi Holtz, Lynn Maki, Jameson Goetz
Category: Significant Investment in Helping the Community

Anja Smith and Mackenna Sutkowski are 5th grade students at Elm Creek Elementary. Each girl is a powerhouse in her own right and together they are a dynamic duo. Many Elm Creek school community groups benefit from their leadership and participation: ECTV, school newspaper, safety patrol, Fuel Up to Play 60, and the student SOAR store, to name a few. They balance classwork and community service in a seemingly effortless manner and cheerfully volunteer wherever they see a need. Mackenna and Anja are positive, take charge leaders in and out of the classroom. They have the respect of peers who look up to them and know they can be counted on. Elm Creek’s loss will surely be middle school’s gain!



Enrollment Center



Krissy Zimba, *District Homeless Liaison*
Nominator: Jim Greeley
Category: Significant Investment in Helping the Community

Every day, Krissy demonstrates a significant investment in helping the community by working with some of our most vulnerable students and families that we serve in Osseo Area Schools. Krissy works directly with our homeless and foster care students and families. More specifically, those who lack a fixed regular and adequate nighttime residence, and those that qualify for McKinney-Vento Homeless Act. Krissy works hard to support these students to ensure a full and equal opportunity for all students to succeed in school. In addition, she ensures these students have rights like, immediate enrollment, transportation setup, and automatic qualification for free student meals. Krissy’s work and passion exemplifies the districts mission, and she provides a much-needed resource and helping hand, to our homeless and foster students and families.



Fair Oaks Elementary



Cheryl Piotraschke, Educator
Nominator: Kristine Frei
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Cheryl has been at Fair Oaks Elementary for 11 years in the role of Instructional Coach/Academic Coach. She spends countless hours helping to make the classroom teachers’ loads lighter. Whether it be that she plans interventions for our students and gets the materials and resources to our Education Support Professionals or sits with staff to plan out lessons that need support or guidance, she has made our jobs easier. She is a support and advocate for both the teachers and the students. She works with students carrying out interventions in every spare minute she has in her schedule and she spends countless hours mentoring students. She has led our family engagement committee and poured hours into planning school events. Thank you, Cheryl, for being a dedicated and devoted educator.

Txujci Thao, Student
Nominator: Vicky Thompson
Category: Significant Investment in Their Own Learning

Txujci Thao is a fifth grade student at Fair Oaks Elementary School. Txujci is an English as a second language learner who is responsible, positive, assertive, and compassionate. Txujci faces many cultural and linguistic challenges, but those challenges do not stand in his way of learning. Every day he takes his learning seriously by going beyond what is expected of him. Both at school and at home, Txujci completes expected work but then does even more to improve his learning. His hard work, effort, and grit is beyond any of his 5th grade peers. It is with great honor that Fair Oaks recognizes Txujci for this outstanding accomplishments.

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Fernbrook Elementary



James Oelke, Educator
Nominator: Jeff Zastrow
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Mr. Oelke has served school communities like Fernbrook’s for decades in high level special education programs, and most recently as a long-time behavior intervention teacher. James shows an unwavering focus on putting kids first and has a special heart for the most challenged kids and their families. As Mr. Oelke moves on to his next adventure, he will be sorely missed.

Eldar Sayfullaev and Alina Sayfullaeva, Students
Nominator: Jeff Zastrow
Category: Significant Investment in Their Own Learning

Alina and Eldar started at Fernbrook Elementary school in August 2018. Their family moved from Uzbekistan in order to receive medical care for Alina. In the past year and a half, they have overcome tremendous obstacles such as learning English, adjusting to a new culture and country, and navigating medical and educational systems. Both Eldar and Alina have shown passion and dedication in all that they do in school. They have made significant academic growth and make education a priority. They model compassion, respect, and perseverance in all that they do.

Garden City Elementary



Ethel Cooper, Student

Nominator: Sarah Frame

Category: Significant Investment in Modeling for Youth

Garden City's fifth grade teachers nominated Ethel Cooper because she is a positive role model through her leadership skills and take-charge attitude. She is involved in a variety of extra-curricular activities that require perseverance and advanced organizational skills, as well as demand high levels of communication and social skills for success. Ethel is an exemplary person and an outstanding candidate for this award.

Donna Peavey, Secretary

Nominator: David Branch

Category: Significant Investment in Helping the Community

Donna has worked in Osseo Area Schools since August 2005. She has been our "Customer Service Champion"! She has adjusted and modified to the changing racial, cultural, and language demographics of our school. She welcomes as many families as she can with Spanish. While she is not fluent in Spanish, you can frequently hear her say to our Spanish speaking families, "Hola. Yo hablo español un poquito." (Hi. I speak Spanish a little.). She will ask parents to repeat certain words and use her Spanish/English dictionary to figure out what they are trying to tell her! She also records her automated voice messages in English and Spanish. These efforts put our families at ease, letting them know their home language is valued and respected. Donna truly is truly dedicated the students, families, and teachers of the Garden City community. Donna is all about "Si Se Puedo!" Yes We Can!

Maple Grove Middle School



Kendra Grand, Volunteer

Nominator: Lisa Hartman

Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Kendra is a member of our Parents and Community Together (PACT) organization at Maple Grove Middle School. This year she volunteered to work with teachers and students to organize a recycling program in our school cafeteria. Kendra spent hours meeting with district and school personnel to understand our needs and did extensive research with Hennepin County and other local agencies. Kendra wrote a grant to solicit funding for the materials needed for recycling and she worked with teachers to design lessons and materials to teach the recycling process to our students. In addition, she comes to the cafeteria each day to work with student volunteers from our Eco Warriors club and often stays to help clean between lunch periods. Her contributions are having a significant impact to help our school community and students understand the importance of managing our resources to care for our environment.

Heather Sheedy, Student

Nominator: Lisa Hartman

Category: Significant Investment in Modeling for Youth

Heather is a kind-hearted, hard-working student with a bright future. She comes to school each day with a beautiful smile on her face determined to learn and be the best student she can be while serving as a great role model to peers. Heather is also musically talented. She is in our school orchestra and was the female lead in our fall musical, Honk. Heather is a leader and demonstrates this daily through words and actions. She has contributed to our community at Maple Grove Middle School in the classroom, through her role as a WEB (Where Everybody Belongs) leader, as a Student Leader in our after-school Keeping Integrity Nurturing Diversity (KIND) group, and by planning and co-leading a school-wide assembly this year as an 8th grade student. Heather, we are proud of you and thank you for your leadership at Maple Grove Middle School!

Maple Grove Senior High



Darwin Kreft, *Educator*
Nominator: Maple Grove Crimson Staff Members
Category: Significant Investment in Modeling for Youth

Darwin Kreft is a genuine global thinker that models inclusiveness, acceptance, and tremendous moral character. His career has spanned multiple schools, content areas, generations and even continents! His positive, kind spirit creates trust and builds respect which makes him a natural confidant and mentor for students and staff alike. The Crimson Family is incredibly fortunate to have him on staff as a counselor, and we are a better school because of him.

Howard Ramaley, *Student*
Nominator: Ryan Smolarek
Category: Significant Investment in Their Own Learning

I have known Howie since he was a freshman (now a graduating Crimson senior). He is quite possibly the most dedicated learner I have ever met. Howie has spent thousands of hours outside of school working to perfect his 3D modeling and animating skills. He realized his interest early at Maple Grove Senior and has been at his computer, modeling ever since. The work that he does looks like it belongs in the video games and television shows! He has shown amazing perseverance in life, and I look forward to what is next for Howie as he starts his college journey!

North View Middle School



E'Mary Lee, *Student*
Nominator: Diana Bledsoe
Category: Significant Investment in Their Own Learning

E' Mary Lee is an incredible young lady who has grown tremendously since her time at North View Middle School. She is a trustworthy, reliable, good-humored student leader and friend who supports others in and out of the classroom. She is a pleasure to have in class, and her positive attitude and belief in herself, even in the face of difficulty, is an immensely admirable asset. I'm confident that she will continue to demonstrate the same diligence, perseverance, and optimism that she showed her teachers and her peers in the future.

Arlene Strum, *Nutrition Services*
Nominator: Diana Bledsoe
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Ms. Arlene Strum was a hardworking, positive professional that took a student-centered approach when working for the North View Middle School community. She had a passion to do whatever it takes for our students, families and community members to feel supported. It has been an honor to have worked with her.



Oak View Elementary



Patricia Ellingson, *Volunteer Coordinator*
Nominator: William Kuendig
Category: Significant Investment in Helping the Community

Tricia Ellingson, Oak View Elementary School’s volunteer coordinator, was selected for this honor because of her commitment to engaging the community in the life of our school. Managing the day-to-day functioning of our vibrant community volunteering efforts is quite challenging, and Tricia constantly strives to grow those ranks, through both individual and corporate partnerships. We at Oak View feel the benefits of her work in so many ways, from partnering with classroom teachers on behind the scenes project preparation, to coordinating volunteers for our indoor recess classes and managing our wildly successful Scholastic Book Fair. Tricia has been a strong supporter of Oak View’s Parent Teacher Organization and served at one time as PTO president. Tricia’s service to Oak View is invaluable!

Kelechukwu (KC) Nwosu, *Student*
Nominator: Renae Boone
Category: Significant Investment in Their Own Learning

KC demonstrates a significant investment in his own learning through his perseverance, love of learning and pursuit of knowledge in all academic areas. KC creates his own challenges and engages peers in solving these challenges, always with kindness and humor. His peers respect him for his positive attitude and his demonstration of responsibility regarding his learning. He is a leader and uses his skills to assist others with respect and empathy. KC’s tenaciousness and thirst for knowledge find him creating achievable hopes, dreams and goals. By doing what he loves, learning, he inspires and motivates all he comes in contact with. The world is his!

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Osseo Area Learning Center



Emily Bollinger, *Educator*
Nominator: Zachary Bair
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Emily continuously demonstrates a high level of professionalism, initiative, and intrinsic motivation. Her drive to improve herself as an educator is contagious and sets the example for colleagues to seek perpetual improvement. Her presence reminds me of the value of learning and the importance of actively seeking empathy. Her daily practice makes it obvious that she is focused on supporting all students and is not satisfied until every student achieves their goals. Emily is admired as an educator and as a human being who has made positive impact on students and staff.

Adrian Sanchez, *Student*
Nominator: Emily Bollinger
Category: Significant Investment in Modeling for Youth

Adrian is an exemplary student at the Osseo Area Learning Center. He is personable and has fostered positive relationships with both staff and students. In times of conflict, Adrian has been a voice of reason among his peers, consistently affirming their worth and value and helping them make better decisions. In doing so, Adrian has modeled stand-up behavior by de-escalating and re-focusing his classmates. Additionally, despite working long hours at his part-time job each week, Adrian is focused on his academics, working diligently and consistently every day as he progresses toward graduation. Adrian is an incredible young man, one who models for others the qualities of a star student.

Betty and Don Skoglund, *Educators*
Nominator: Diane Fowler, Vice President of OARE
Category: Significant Investment in Helping the Community

Betty and Don Skoglund are former educators in Osseo Area Schools. Betty taught Readiness and 2nd Grade at Crest View, Park Brook, Willow Lane and Oak View Elementary schools. She retired after teaching for 30 years. Don spent his 34-year career teaching Social Studies at Osseo Senior High. Together Don and Betty worked as volunteers in Model United Nations and The Close Up Program (sponsoring student study-trips to Washington DC). They also raised money for student dances. Don has been a Trustee of District 279 Foundation for 15 years, raising money for foundation activities and grants. He also served 15 years on the City of Maple Grove’s Advisory Committee. Together Betty and Don have volunteered for Maple Grove’s Community Organization, working with summer festivals. For the last 20 years, they have also worked for The League of Women voters, helping with voter registration and they also serve as election judges. Thank you Betty and Don Skoglund for your investment in youth and our community.

Osseo Middle School



Alex Herrald, *Student*
Nominator: Brian Chance
Category: Significant Investment in Modeling for Youth

Alex has done an excellent job modeling the Oriole way during his three years at Osseo Middle School. He brings a positive attitude to any situation and is always willing to help another student out. The compassion that he shows towards others is something this world needs more of. We are sad to see Alex leave Osseo Middle School, but there are great things ahead for him!

Dan Miller, *Custodian*
Nominator: Brian Chance
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Dan served the Osseo School District for 36 plus years. During this time, he mentored many employees and provided opportunities that helped them accomplish their personal goals. Dan also mentored many of our students and built positive relationships with them. He was always intentional about making the best of situations and encourages others to do the same. Thank you Dan for your excellence in serving our students, staff, and our school community.

Lynda Yeah, Student

Nominator: Doris Moylan

Category: Significant Investment in Their Own Learning

Lynda is one of the sweetest, most compassionate, and strongest young ladies I have the privilege and honor to work with. She is also very kind and humble. From the time that Lynda entered our building, she has grown in confidence and has been a strong role model for all her peers. She takes an active role in her education not only by attending classes daily but also by actively engaging. Through her words and actions, Lynda demonstrates healthy boundaries and shows so much compassion for others. I see her supporting her peers and helping them when they need it and often even before they ask. She is someone they go to for help or advice. She is trusted and well respected by all.

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Osseo Senior High



Kurtis Banks, Student

Nominator: Michael Lehan

Category: Significant Investment in Developing Their Own Talents

Kurtis Banks is an incredible scholar and human. He's focused when he needs to be, goofy when the situation calls for it, and is polite and courteous in any and every circumstance. Those attributes alone would make anyone want to work with him, but, luckily for us, he is also extremely talented vocally and skilled as an actor. If you asked him to admit that, he would just tell you how talented everyone else around him is. His humility and support of others is unwavering. It is rare to find a scholar with such natural talent and incredible work ethic, but Kurtis possesses each. This past fall Kurtis played the lead in the school musical – a moment for him to shine – and in true Kurtis fashion he took the opportunity to ensure his fellow cast mates shone just as brightly. Our drama department has a motto – “GBKB”. It stands for “God Bless Kurtis Banks”, and daily reflects and reminds of the hard work, humility and kindness it takes to embody true excellence.

Ronnie King, Educator

Nominator: Michael Lehan

Category: Significant Investment in Modeling for Youth

In his 25+ years in education, it is safe to say that Ronnie King not only touched, but greatly impacted the lives of the scholars he served in incredibly positive ways. His embodied what it truly means to be a good human within his role at Osseo Senior High, his personal community and the larger local community as well. His dedication to equity and to the story and voice of each scholar with whom he interacted made him a trusted mentor to many. The scholars and staff in his sphere were blessed with his thoughtful life lessons, caring attention and larger than life spirit. He is a model of unwavering excellence, and his impact within District 279 is lasting.

2019 Investment in Youth Award Recipients



Palmer Lake Elementary



Kayden Simone Cochran, *Student*
Nominator: Abigail Morford
Category: Significant Investment in Helping the Community

Kayden Simone is passionate about making her community a better place. She often gives up her own time to mentor other students while at school. She is always smiling and showing kindness to everyone she meets. Kayden has also taken the initiative to set up a time for classmates at Palmer Lake Elementary School to work with students who have physical disabilities. She strives to make everyone feel welcome and have a sense of belonging while at school.

Amy Oelkers, *Volunteer*
Nominator: Amanda Ruhlmann and Micaela Goebel
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Amy has gone above and beyond in supporting kindergarten and first grade students at Palmer Lake Elementary. She is willing to jump in and help wherever she is needed and does so with a smile. She is caring and compassionate towards every student she encounters. Palmer Lake students and staff are so lucky to have her!

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Park Brook Elementary



Wendy Schulte, *Volunteer*
Nominator: Denise Morrisette and Courtney Brenny
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Wendy is a valuable volunteer at Park Brook Elementary. She faithfully comes in once-a-week to work in the copy room on all sorts of tasks that keep Park Brook efficiently running. When she knows that there is extra work to be done, it is not surprising to see her stop in other times during the week or to take projects home with her and drop them off when has completed the tasks. She supports Turkey BINGO, Winter Funland, Field Day and field trips by coming and spending the entire time ensuring that everything that needs to be completed is ready for the students and families. Her smiling, positive attitude is always welcome at Park Brook. It is a joy to have her as part of the Park Brook community!

Emily Vue, *Student*
Nominator: Renee Pelton
Category: Significant Investment in Their Own Learning

Emily is a positive, always smiling, fifth-grade student at Park Brook Elementary. She is multilingual, Hmong and English, and has now exited the English Language program. She is involved in many programs at Park Brook, including choir, Girls on the Run, the Double Dutch Team, Book Club, Hmong Club and others. Emily is inquisitive, cares about others, and is one who will initiate conversations with adults. This year she has been the office messenger at the end-of-the-day, and if she is not able to come to assist, her responsibility is exemplified by her consistently finding a student to substitute for her. Park Brook is a better place because of her positive attitude, desire to be involved in the community and modeling for others. Emily took ownership of her future by being fully engaged in the school community.

Park Center Senior High



Bryan Hovde, Educator
Nominator: Patty Sorensen
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Bryan is the Developmental Adapted Physical Education (or DAPE as it is also called) /Unified Physical Education teacher at Park Center Senior High. He models our district mission statement in every way possible through his work with the Adapted Physical Education students in their Adapted PE classes and our mainstream students through Unified Physical Education. Over the years Bryan has built equipment, guided students in wall climbing, and taught students self-defense, as well as providing many other opportunities – always with the highest integrity and compassion. For example, last spring, Bryan helped a student that spends most of his time in a wheelchair climb to the top of the football stadium bleachers. The student was able to look out over the campus from the very top. The joy on the young man’s face was priceless.

Bai Jassy, Student
Nominator: Melanie Stewart
Category: Significant Investment in Overcoming Adversity

Bai has exhibited the ability to overcome adversity and continue to achieve success in school and life no matter what the circumstances. Bai came to Park Center 3 years ago from Senegal. He was a junior and by the time he started with us, he had attended over 7 different schools in Senegal. Bai came here not knowing English very well, but he was fluent in 3 other languages. His desire to learn and his ability to learn languages quickly, helped propel Bai and he was able to exit English Learning after just 1 year. Bai is now a senior who not only does well academically, he is a leader in many other activities. After high school he plans to study medicine and is considering Winona or St. Mary’s. He is a role model to his peers and a kind and humble individual who will make a huge impact in our community and world.

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Rice Lake Elementary



Jessie Hanson, Educator
Nominator: Rice Lake Staff
Category: Significant Investment in Helping the Community

Jessie Hanson has been teaching at Rice Lake for 18 years and during that time, she has filled her heart with over 450 students. She works tirelessly to make sure that every student knows that they are loved, valued, and what they think matters. Jessie is truly the standard for compassion, empathy, generosity, and continual learning. She is known for saying “And what do you think about that? How does that make you feel?” Whether she’s organizing outings for charitable causes, adopting families during the holidays, seeking out donations for Rice Lake students, providing food packs for the weekend, comforting, advocating, offering a hug, or welcoming a new student with open arms, Jessie cares about her community and for students and staff at Rice Lake. Every moment is a teachable moment but just as important, for Jessie, every moment is a learning opportunity.

Candice Kararu, Student
Nominator: Rice Lake Staff
Category: Significant Investment in Modeling for Youth

Candice is a joy for everyone who knows her. She is kind, caring, patient, determined, focused and very well behaved. Candice shows effort in everything she does and is always willing to help with any task. She is reliable, calming, and always goes above and beyond. Candice’s thoughtfulness makes her a great friend and role model for other students. Her stamina, smile, and positivity are so appreciated in the classroom and beyond. Candice, Rice Lake is so proud to nominate you for Significant Investment in Modeling for Youth.

Rush Creek Elementary



Gwen Krutzig, Educator
Nominator: Jenna Diem
Category: Significant Investment in Modeling for Youth

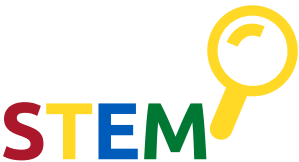
Gwen is an outstanding educator. She is a positive role model for students and staff at Rush Creek. She works with all students to support them with their social emotional, academic, and peer relationship needs. Gwen is a caring individual that continually strives to help students identify strategies to build a positive relationships and problem solve in difficult situations. Gwen is leader that is always willing help anyone that needs support. She is never too busy to take the time to see someone for who they are and what they have to offer.

Jack Kuhn, Student
Nominator: Angi Kettner
Category: Significant Investment in Modeling for Youth

Jack is a positive student leader at Rush Creek. He is a member of the Student Library Advisory Team and Rocky Run Club leader and coach. He has recruited both student coaches and scanners to assist with the run club program during fifth grade recess time. He has demonstrated leadership and problem-solving skills by developing schedules, making sure shifts are covered, and helping second graders be successful with the program. He is currently leading a project to raise funds for a book vending machine to positively impact students through the school's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) work. Jack is self-motivated and a humble leader at Rush Creek Elementary.

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Weaver Lake Elementary



Nola Heruth, Student
Nominator: Shannon LaTourelle
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Nola is an example for all students and people alike. She has been a hard worker throughout her career in elementary especially persevering in reading. Nola has a positive, uplifting attitude and is always encouraging others. This year, Nola volunteered to read to second graders, showing her confidence in her abilities and the skills she has achieved. Nola continues to make progress every year which shows her investment and commitment to her own education.

Jiasheah Vue, Student
Nominator: Kyle Schumacher
Category: Significant Investment in Their Own Learning

Jiasheah demonstrates perseverance and a love of learning. She shows a quiet confidence and leads by example in sharing her time, talents and resources. She has shown responsibility consistently from Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. She demonstrates leadership as a school ambassador. She works on phenology daily, intentionally includes others in small group research projects and helped originate the Weaver Lake Phenology podcast team. Her friendly and intentional interaction inspires confidence in her peers.

Mary Pat Smith, Nurse
Nominator: Shannon Alexander
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Mary Pat was recently recognized with the Outstanding Nurse Award by Mpls/St. Paul Magazine. She has been an advocate for our youngest and first students in the Early Childhood Special Education program. Mary is one of the first faces that parents see when they are entering the world of special education. With her gentle and kind demeanor, she and her team walk parents, guardians, care givers and the children through the process of getting support services in their ever-important early years of learning. Mary Pat is not only an advocate for the families in which she meets and serves, she is a support for the teachers, pathologists, therapists, ESP's, custodians, and coordinators in the program. Thank you, Mary Pat. We are honored to serve alongside of you and forever grateful for all that you do for us.

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Woodland Elementary



Jeanne Heer, Educator
Nominator: Courtney Knutson
Category: Significant Investment in the Betterment of Education

Jeanne is a retired teacher from Woodland Elementary and currently a volunteer. She is being honored for her dedication to students and education over the course of several years. Jeanne is patient in her interactions with students and provides positive encouragement and support. She brings humor, creativity, music, and playfulness as she works with children. Jeanne has the innate ability to keep everyone included and connected as a group. From staff members, to students, to parents, she is always keenly aware of everyone and makes sure they are comfortable, safe, happy, and gives space for all to have a voice. Jeanne is always positive, upbeat and smiling. Her passion for the well being of our world is inspiring. Jeanne has been a gift to Woodland Elementary and our community. Thank you Jeanne for your service and dedication to our youth.

Nathan Hunter, Student
Nominator: Laura Larson
Category: Significant Investment in Modeling for Youth

One word to describe Nathan Hunter is selfless. He is constantly thinking about how he can improve the lives of his fellow students and the adults in the school building. For example, he donated his own money that he had earned to our schools Reading for Research program to help fight cancer and win an award for his class. He always has a smile on his face and strives for excellence in academics and his sports. He truly understands when he needs to step up and be a leader and when is the time to follow. This leadership is clearly evident in his volunteer participation on the school's SOAR Ambassador team where he is a leader in modeling school expectations, helping others, and fostering a positive school climate. He is always willing to go above and beyond in this leadership role. Nathan is a young man of great character and an outstanding member in our school family!

Zanewood Community School



Nichol McGill, *Education Support Professional*

Nominator: Kathy Petruzzi

Category: Significant Investment in Helping the Community

Nichol consistently goes above and beyond to help our students in need. She has secured donations from outside sources which allows students to receive nonperishable food for the weekend as well as warm winter clothing and school supplies. She spent many hours outside of work coordinating and distributing holiday packages for our students and families in transitional housing. In addition, Nichol has secured funding to have a washer and dryer at Zanewood to help our families in need. I have watched Nichol work with students experiencing trauma in the most caring and empathetic manner that leaves our students knowing they are cared for and loved.

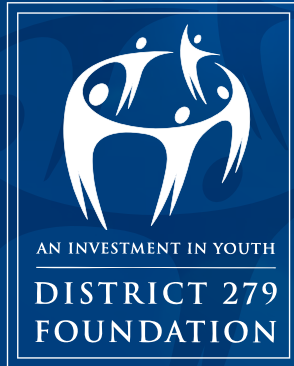
Regina Xiong, *Student*

Nominator: Kelly Stewart

Category: Significant Investment in Their Own Learning

Regina is a 'quiet giant' in the classroom. Though she doesn't always say much in class (except for Readers Theater, where she becomes a future Oscar winning actress!), she packs a mean punch when it comes to her academics. Time after time she has shown a love of learning by consistently doing her best, trying her hardest, and completing all of her tasks in an exceptional manner. Her level of work and constant attention to detail has her rising to a high level of success and growth. Regina participates in the Talented and Gifted program, where she demonstrates high enthusiasm and embraces even more challenges.





District 279 Foundation
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Save the Date

Reading is Fun 5K Run/Walk

Fundraiser to benefit media centers in Osseo Area Schools

Saturday, August 8, 2020, at Elm Creek Park Reserve

A Night Out Celebration

Fundraiser to benefit District 279 Foundation programs

Friday, February 5, 2021, at Minneapolis Marriott Northwest