

2018 Teachers of the Year

Eastlake - Lucia Innocent



Mrs. Innocent is a professional in every sense of the word. She comes to work each day with a positive attitude that is recognized by students as well as staff. Mrs. Innocent understands that it is her personal approach that creates the climate and her daily mood that makes the weather. Each day in Mrs. Innocent's classroom is consistently sunny.

Every student who enters her classroom understands that it is acceptable to take academic risks, make mistakes and learn from them. She promotes achievement at different levels and advocates for the growth of each individual student. Mrs. Innocent is always well planned and prepared. She provides enjoyable learning formats that motivate her students on a daily basis. She takes a student-centered approach that encourages thought and discussion. Her highly engaging lessons usually involve problem solving, debate and hands on learning.

Mrs. Innocent is a true team player. She is a member of various schoolwide and districtwide committees as well as multiple teacher teams. Her goal is to set the bar high and move her students and colleagues forward. She participates in many extracurricular activities such as Expressive Reading, Fifth Grade Basketball Game, Family Math and Reading Nights, and the Fun Fair. Mrs. Innocent consistently reflects on her practice and considers all members of her school community when making pedagogical decisions. She does all of this and still makes plenty of time for her newborn son as well as her family.

Intervale and Northvail – Kristin Webb



Mrs. Kristin Webb was chosen as Teacher of the Year at both of the schools in which she teaches vocal music. Intervale and Northvail teachers recognize the many talents she brings to her teaching. Kristin exhibits an excellent knowledge and pedagogy of music, using her vocal gift to demonstrate and model concepts and techniques. Her modeling has helped students perform at a very high standard.

Kristin does an excellent job of inspiring and instilling a true love of music in all of the students she teaches and continuously plans engaging lessons that give students the opportunity to learn through various modalities. This past school year, Mrs. Webb was the musical director for musicals at both of her schools. Many after school hours were spent teaching and rehearsing with the children. Additionally, Kristin teaches tone chimes and a vocal ensemble during student recess to provide children the opportunity to further their musical skills and knowledge.

Kristin is a consummate professional. Some quotes from her colleagues that demonstrate Kristin's collegiality are: "Kristin is considerate and always weighs her actions and how they will affect the teachers and the school," "Kristin is congenial with her co-workers and always has a smile for everyone and a positive attitude;" and "Never, have I encountered her having anything less than a positive attitude. I am consistently impressed by her professionalism and the high standard at which she gets the students to perform." For these reasons Kristin's colleagues at Intervale and Northvail School choose her to be their school's teacher of the year.

Knollwood - Jackie Halbach



Jackie has been working at Knollwood School for the past five years. Prior to her role as our school media specialist, Jackie worked as a classroom teacher in both second and third grades.

Jackie goes above and beyond for her colleagues and students alike. In her classroom, she gets to know her students on an academic level as well as on an emotional one, creating a learning environment which is structured, engaging and respectful. She develops instructional activities that are rooted in meaningful curriculum-based objectives and puts 150% into everything she does.

In her new role this year as Media Specialist, Jackie has transformed the Knollwood Media Center into a true hub of reading. This now very attractive space has an engaging reading nook where children are invited to read for pleasure in a comfortable seating area.

Jackie continues to captivate her students with exciting book reviews, author highlights and technology tips! She started the Robotics Club at Knollwood School in 2014 and continues to facilitate this club each year. Being Google Level 1 certified has helped Jackie to be a "go-to" troubleshooter for colleagues as well as incorporating many Google Applications into her daily instruction. Next Spring, Jackie will graduate with a Master's Degree in Educational Technology.

Lake Hiawatha - Christal DiVincent



Ms. Christal DiVincent is a dedicated educator. In her role as an ESL teacher at Lake Hiawatha School, she works with students across grades K-5, often for multiple years. This allows her to forge strong bonds with her students and their families. She gets to know her children well and has a strong understanding of their abilities and needs. She utilizes this knowledge to make ESL classes fun and engaging for her young learners. She is always willing to share her knowledge about ways to meet the needs of ESL learners with colleagues. She strives to foster warm relationships with families, help them become familiar with our school, and get them actively involved with the children's education. Ms. DiVincent also serves as a

facilitator of the Morning Enrichment Program and the after school ESL Homework Club. Her commitment to her students is evident in everything she does.

Lake Parsippany - Jessica Hall



Jessica is an utmost professional and model teacher. She is always hard working, dedicated, kind, considerate, thoughtful, and inspiring in taking care of her students. She goes above and beyond to take new programs to the next level with students and makes learning fun and exciting for them. This individual differentiates instruction across the curriculum and utilizes a variety of teaching strategies to meet the needs of all of the students. She continues to support the community in attending many events while fostering others, such as visits from published authors and book signings to provide the staff and students with a lasting memory.

Mrs. Hall provides essential leadership within the school and district, and she dedicates herself to providing a safe, friendly, and positive environment for students to learn. She is recognized by her students, parents, colleagues, and administration as a true professional in all aspects.

It is without question that Mrs. Jessica Hall has been selected as Lake Parsippany School's Teacher of the Year.

Littleton – Kathleen Waite



Kate Waite is a first grade teacher at Littleton School and a teacher in the Parsippany-Troy Hills School district for 20 years. Kate will do anything for her students to help them succeed. She teaches them to problem-solve, learn from mistakes, and how to communicate effectively with others, especially in difficult situations. Kate is well-respected by her peers and supportive of her colleagues. Her positive attitude is felt and seen daily with students, parents, and fellow staff members. She comes to work each day with a smile on her face and leads by example, as noted by her grade-level colleagues. Kate has a great sense of humor and inner strength.

Kate takes much pride in her professional development and attends workshops and seminars to enhance her teaching. This summer she is attending a workshop on Mindfulness. Kate displays empathy, compassion, and is never judgmental. It is truly deserving for her to receive Littleton's Teacher of the Year award.

Mt. Tabor – Kathleen Washington



Kate Washington has been a dedicated teacher in the District for over thirty years. She has taught a variety of grades and levels throughout her tenure in Parsippany.

Initially she gave her special education students the tools and confidence to be successful. As a kindergarten teacher, she acknowledged the children's developmental needs by providing an environment which was developmentally appropriate, but also provided them the academic environment to foster learning and independence.

Kate is currently a third grade teacher and an active participant in many of Mt. Tabor's School's extra-curricular activities. She is well respected by her colleagues and they often seek her advice when needed. She is always willing to help out a colleague/friend when necessary.

We are proud to present the *2017-2018 Teacher of the Year Award* to Ms. Kate Washington

Rockaway Meadow School – Shaleen Pandorf



Mrs. Pandorf teaches 5th grade at Rockaway Meadow School. During her time here, she has established a strong rapport with students, fellow staff members, and families.

Mrs. Pandorf takes great pride in her classroom and instills the same pride in her students. She shows warmth, caring, respect, and fairness for all students. Mrs. Pandorf exudes high expectations and conveys to her students that they can and will be able to reach the goals that have been set. She utilizes a wide range of well chosen, effective strategies, materials, and groupings to accelerate student learning. In addition, Mrs. Pandorf effectively utilizes room arrangement, materials, and displays to create an inviting climate in an effort to maximize student learning. She continues to find new ways to motivate and inspire the young minds in her classroom!

Mrs. Pandorf is a positive team player; contributing ideas, expertise, and time to support the overall mission of our school.

Thank you, Mrs. Pandorf, for all that you do to enhance the learning community at Rockaway Meadow School.

Troy Hills – Andrea Axt

Miss Axt is a Special Education, Resource program teacher. She has also worked as a General Education classroom teacher in the past, as well.

Miss Axt is a most energetic and hard-working teacher! She has been described by colleagues as a great co-teacher, whose dedication to education and to her students is inspiring! Miss Axt regularly communicates with teachers and parents in order to help her students. She demonstrates a great deal of patience with her students, working hard to meet their different learning needs. Miss Axt has taken on many other roles as well, including as a teacher in the “Morning Math and Reading” programs; serving on district and school committees; and being a Troy Hills “ PTHEA Building Rep.” Miss Axt can often be found helping students during her lunchtime. Whether within a pull-out resource room setting, or when working with students within the inclusive, mainstreamed setting; Miss Axt always sets high expectations for her students to do their best! Miss Axt is most sensitive to the emotional and behavioral needs of her students. She creates a positive, engaging and nurturing environment in which her students can continue to learn and grow, each and every day.

Brooklawn – Kellie Andersen



Current students describe this year’s BMS Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Kellie Andersen, as smart, kind, logical, thoughtful, encouraging, sparkalicious, brilliant, creative, determined, persistent, kind, helpful, funny, positive, outgoing, entertaining, happy, weird in a good way and simply the best!

Co-workers describe her as having a passion for teaching and believing in her students! Her passion is contagious, and she designs her math lessons to meet the diverse needs of her students including multiple methods to solve problems and differentiate. You will find her helping students during lunch every day.

Kellie also keeps her teaching current and interesting each year. New techniques Kellie has implemented this year are computer based three-act lessons and online assessments that correlate with her curriculum. She also volunteered to participate in instructional rounds for the second year, working this year with her science and social studies team members. Moreover, Kellie is a team player on her academic team. Collaboration and teamwork are essential and demonstrated in development of cross curriculum team days, academic bowls and grade level field trips. Additionally, Kellie is committed to her profession by serving as a cooperative teacher for many new, aspiring teachers.

Being involved in BMS activities has always been a priority for this outstanding teacher. Kellie advises the school newspaper, Knight Life, fostering her love for reading and writing, providing supportive leadership with her editors and writers, and fostering student leadership and building friendships along the way. She also helped as a softball coach when the girls made it to the county championship. You can find her supporting

students by attending plays, concerts and sporting events, as well. Her commitment to her students and all students is endless.

Kellie is truly an asset to our BMS family. She is currently enrolled on the holiday committee, retirement committee and the chairperson for the Sunshine Committee organizing all of the ½ day bagels for the entire faculty. She serves in the role of treasurer for this committee. Kellie attends PTSA meetings, volunteering and helping out the best ways she can for BMS.

Overall, Kellie is best described as spreading “Sunshine” to her co-workers and even helping with running “The Biggest Loser” to help some staff on their journey to weight loss. She believes in her students and in our school district. She has inspired colleagues to be even better teachers and to not give up on students. A colleague notes, “Her southern charm is contagious” and another colleague explains, “She wears her heart on her sleeve.” This year’s teacher of the year has the support and admiration of her building administration and supervisor to receive such an award. Congratulations to Mrs. Kellie Andersen for all you do!

CENTRAL Middle School – Jennifer Czepiel



administrators.

Mrs. Jennifer Czepiel is a dynamic, creative teacher who effectively connects with all students in either her classroom or during lunch while helping a student prepare for an assessment. She has a true vision of what a sixth grader can accomplish and thinks beyond the textbook to create highly engaging lessons. Mrs. Czepiel is patient, kind and highly respected by her students, colleagues and

Parsippany High School – Christina Zarcone



Ms. Zarcone is a passionate teacher who has an amazing ability to connect and relate to her students. She enthusiastically delivers her content, regularly collaborates with her colleagues to normalize instruction, and intricately plans interactive and engaging lessons for her students. She works extremely hard to ensure that her students have the skills that they need to be successful students and people. Simply put, Christina Zarcone is invested in her students, her subject matter, and her school.

Parsippany Hills High School – Jessica Brosnan



Mrs. Brosnan is in her 13th year of teaching and continues to find new and exciting ways to hook her students through interesting content delivered in creative and engaging ways. Her classes are filled with meaningful and fun discussions, always related to the literature and skills being presented. She continually impresses her colleagues and administrators with innovative ideas, a growth-mindset, a passion for education, and a caring attitude. Mrs. Brosnan's contributions to the school include building and maintaining strong elective courses in the English Department like Public Speaking and Creative Writing, organizing the first ever PHHS Lib Dubs, various co-curricular advisorships over the years, and she is currently in pursuit of her doctorate in education. The Vikings are proud and honored to have Jessica Brosnan as our PHHS Teacher of the Year!