2007 Excellence in Education Awards

hosted by

Thursday, April 26, 2007
BWI Airport Marriott Hotel
Linthicum Heights, Maryland

Sponsored by:
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In Cooperation with
Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Association of Educational Leaders
Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County
Please Note

The Excellence in Education Awards Ceremony is a time to celebrate outstanding teachers and education/business partnerships, and to socialize with friends and colleagues. To provide each teacher and business honoree with the dignity and recognition they deserve, we ask that you refrain from talking at your table during the awards ceremony.

Thank you for your cooperation.
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Marena Harrison is a former Miss Maryland 2003 and Miss Maryland USA 2005. She is the first and only Maryland woman to represent the state in two nationally televised pageants, Miss America and Miss USA, where she placed in the Top 5 and Top 10, respectively, earning more than $50,000 in cash and prizes and $52,000 in scholarship assistance through the Miss America and Miss Universe Organizations.

A graduate of Meade High School and the University of Maryland, Marina received her bachelors in communication/public relations with a minor in government & politics in May 2003. She graduated Lambda Pi Eta (Communications Honors) and was a College Park Scholar receiving a citation in Media, Self, & Society.

Her professional experience includes a three-year stint at the U.S. Department of State, where she worked at the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, VA. While at the State Department Marina met Colin Powell, and worked personally for former FSI Ambassador Ruth Davis. In her final semester in college, Marina interned at Amlev Dershowitz Communications- an international relations firm, at which she worked primarily with Fortune-500 and Homeland Security clients.

Marina’s passion for education began when she was the 1998-99 Anne Arundel County Student Member of the Board of Education. Later she worked with the Maryland State Department of Education as a communications and youth development specialist, where her primary duties included serving as spokesperson for the PRIDE: Maryland Public Schools media. Last April, world-renown Pediatric Neurosurgeon Dr. Benjamin Carson, awarded Marina with the prestigious Sonja Carson Education Award, for her work as an advocate and motivational speaker to youth in the State of Maryland.

Currently Marina is the Director of International Affairs for the Maryland Office of the Secretary of State. In her role in the Governor’s Executive Department, Marina coordinates the award-winning Maryland Sister States Program which facilitates cultural, business, and educational exchanges between the State of Maryland and foreign countries.

Born in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Marina, 26, grew up all over the United States as a “military brat” but now lives in Baltimore, MD. She is engaged to be married in the fall of 2007.
Excellence in Education

Program Schedule

Reception/Registration – 6:00
A time for fellowship with family, friends and colleagues

Seating for Dinner – 6:30

Welcome
Marina Harrison
Mistress of Ceremonies
2003 Miss Maryland; 2005 Miss Maryland USA

Greetings
Frederick Sussman
Chairman of the Board, Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce

Bruce Abbott
Vice President & General Manager, Comcast

Dinner – 6:45

Awards Ceremony – 7:30

Honoring Teachers
Kevin M. Maxwell, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Comments
Marina Harrison
Recognizing Excellence
Presentation of the 2007 Teacher Honorees
Marina Harrison

Finalists
Anne Arundel County Private Schools
Kathleen Fowler
Katherine Haas

Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Alicia Appel
Marie Fries
Sandra Le Pori-Myers
Charmain Sutherland
Debra Ann Witt

Promoting Partnerships
Presentation of Business Partnership Nominees and Awards
Sandie Anderson
Chairperson, Education Committee, Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce

Presentations
2007 Anne Arundel County Private Schools Teacher of the Year
2007 Anne Arundel County Public Schools Teacher of the Year

Closing
Marina Harrison
Donna Davis

St. Anne’s Day School

“Walking into Donna Davis’ classroom at St. Anne’s Day School is like walking into a child’s scientific dreamworld.”

Donna Davis spent 19 years in the financial world before going back to school and earning a master’s degree in education. She has been teaching fifth- and sixth-grade science at St. Anne’s since 1998. She entered the teaching profession because of a love for earth and life sciences, and reinforces to her students that science can be found everywhere, not just in her class or a textbook. Her fellow teachers consider her a content expert in both subject areas. She encourages her students through daily hands-on activities and uses the natural world and everything in it to promote a love of science. She even makes up original games to help students more easily grasp the concepts she is teaching.

Kathleen Fowler

The Summit School

“Mrs. Fowler is a hero among her peers at The Summit School. She is a team player and a facilitator of teamwork. She is one who asks just the right question when a question needs to be asked.”

Known as a “quiet, gentle, lead-by-example leader,” Kathleen Fowler has spent 30 years in the teaching profession, including nine years at The Summit School. After only one year, she became a senior staff person for language arts. In 2002, she was appointed to the position of Language Arts Coordinator. In that capacity, Fowler prepares and executes workshops for teachers to extend their knowledge of instructional strategies for reading decoding, reading comprehension, multisensory instruction, and reading diagnostics.

She also has also shared her knowledge with the professional community at large by presenting papers and giving workshops regionally and nationally. She has made presentations at the Association of Independent Maryland Schools, the International Dyslexia Association, and the Blue Ribbon Schools Conference.

Jonnie Stanton Friedman

Chesapeake Academy

“When I was in school, I was taught that I was not an artist. Jonnie, however, makes every student feel like they are an excellent artist with much to offer. No wonder students arrive with a desire to learn and achieve.”

A career artist with 16 years of teaching experience, Jonnie Stanton Friedman has spent the last four years encouraging students at Chesapeake Academy to create with passion. Friedman is credited with helping the school undertake and complete its most ambitious student art project to date: a school mural. The Chesapeake Mural measures 8 feet by 12 feet and is made up of more than 5,000 ceramic titles. Under Friedman’s leadership, the project involved the coordination of 264 students, 35 alumni, 40 teachers, 25 parents, and more than 11,000 man-hours to complete. The school hopes the mural will attract statewide and national attention.

Friedman has taught pre-school art within the Department of Defense school system, and has served on the staff of Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts.
Anne Arundel County

Private Schools Teacher Honorees

Finalist

Katherine Haas
The Key School

"Katherine engenders integrity in all that she does … there will be no ‘Katherine’ to replace her when she retires. She is unique and irreplaceable."

Known as a true renaissance woman, Katherine Haas is a world traveler, artist, and fourth-grade teacher at The Key School. Since 1974, she has worked to inspire the students at The Key School by bringing world cultures to the forefront. She infuses her lessons to students with her own experiences, having lived in China and having been inducted into the Lakota Sioux tribe in North Dakota. Discussion of Chinese brush painting, intricate Native American beading, and soap carving can all be found in Haas’ classes. She is also a lead teacher at The Key School and has brought many fourth-grade colleagues to her level of understanding of many subjects, pedagogy, and high expectations for students.

One of her greatest accomplishments was creating a Muslim unit at the school to have students learn more about the Islamic faith. The program was created with a grant from the National Geographic Education Foundation.

Karen Miletich
St. Andrew’s United Methodist Day School

“Karen Miletich is the consummate professional educator – respected, valued, and loved by the entire St. Andrew's community.”

A middle school math teacher at St. Andrew’s United Methodist Day School, Karen Miletich brings her own passion to a subject that is not generally recognized for its creativity and excitement. Her classes are rich in experiential and contextual learning. Her seventh- and eighth-grade students learn to love the subject through her creative, hands-on approach. She taught third grade in Illinois before traveling to New Hampshire with her husband, who was in the Navy. No matter where the Navy relocated the family, she always managed to find a classroom setting to apply her skill.

“In everything she does, Karen Miletich provides a high standard of learning for her students, while creating a warm and caring atmosphere where each child is encouraged and motivated to learn,” said Dr. Karen Ewing, whose son and daughter have been taught by Miletich.
Alicia Appel teaches freshman English and 10th-grade AVID at Southern High School, where she has been since 2005. She arrived in February 2005 from Mississippi when her husband, a Major in the Air Force, was transferred. The couple had barely escaped Hurricane Katrina, and she immediately immersed herself in the south county community. Seeking their influence as well as that of her colleagues, she had a quick impact on her students. Two months after her arrival at Southern, she was named the school’s Teacher of the Month.

One of her biggest initiatives is The Portfolio Project, which brings volunteers from the area’s faith community to mentor AVID students several times each year. The program has been such a success that it will be used as a model for other schools in the county. She also has helped resurrect the school’s literary magazine.

Heidi Beall has taught fourth grade at Odenton’s Piney Orchard Elementary School since 2000. She began looking into a teaching career at the urging of her mother, who is a secondary school teacher, and immediately found a home in the elementary grades. Whether it’s in the classroom or at a staff meeting, her first concern is always for her students. Called the “voice of reason” by her colleagues, she is well respected for her dedication and involvement. Daily reading is a requirement in her class because she sees reading as the cornerstone for preparing students for all other subjects. She has been co-coordinator of the school’s 24 Math Club since 2004, organizes fourth-grade field trips, and plans the school’s annual Japan Day.

Her influence isn’t limited to Piney Orchard, however. She is the Education Counselor for her church, where she helps teachers prepare Sunday lessons and occasionally serves as a substitute teacher.

June Beard is in her second stint at Severna Park, where she has taught French since 1999. She taught the same subject at the school from 1983 to 1989. A first-generation American whose parents immigrated from Nazi Germany, her life was changed by a year attending college in France. She developed a passion for sharing the French language and culture, and married it with her love for teaching to forge a career that has impacted thousands of students. A demanding teacher who sets her standards very high, she is an inspiration to students and colleagues alike. She makes herself accessible to students who need help at any time, and is equally as likely to make a phone call home notifying parents of a student’s accomplishment as she is to express a concern. As one student put it, “Madame has a knack for piquing her students’ interest in whatever the topic of study may be.”

She is a member of several AACPS committees, longtime president of Severna Park High School’s Faculty Council, and sponsor of the school’s French Club and French National Honor Society.
In my classroom there are colorful displays, student-created work, and motivating posters. Many of the displays are created with the students to create a sense of ownership. By involving the students in the creation, they feel responsibility for their success and the success of their classmates. Students need to know that their opinions and feelings are valued and important.

An educator in Anne Arundel County Public Schools since 2001, Elizabeth Boone has taught sixth-grade mathematics at Severna Park Middle School since 2004. She’s been a teacher, however, since her childhood, when she set up a “classroom” in the basement of her parents’ house. Her desire to teach was cemented, she says, by her middle school math teacher. She incorporates games, technology, and team activities into her lesson plans, and continually finds ways to challenge her students. She urges her students to talk to her not just about math, but about their personal and family lives as well.

Always thinking outside the box, she has been characterized as “creating magic in a classroom.” She consistently challenges students and refuses to relent until each student is successful. Her energy is contagious, and “lunch bunch” students who need help can be found in her classroom eating and working on their skills.

Enter my classroom and energy is in the air. I engage when even the first young man or woman appears. I want to welcome them with joy through our interaction. I share my love of writers and writing, and try to make our time together a positive energy.

To say that Elaine Boothby is a fixture at South River High School is a colossal understatement. Of her 37 years in teaching, 30 have been spent at the Edgewater school. She helped open the school in 1977 and has led the English department there ever since. She developed the school’s Advanced Placement English Literature and Advanced Placement Language and Composition programs, and now teaches Advanced Placement Language and Composition and Advanced Placement Literature and Composition to 11th- and 12th-graders. She has served as a liaison for yearlong exchange students, forging some lasting relationships. Her colleagues are as important to her as her students, and she strives to prepare them to “carry a torch forward.”

Outside the classroom, she has been the school’s “It’s Academic” adviser since 1977, has directed the drama club, and has coached field hockey and lacrosse. As one of her colleagues put it, “It doesn’t take long to get caught up in her passion for her students, for her content, and for life in general.”

It is very important to understand that we, as teachers, are learners ourselves. I strongly agree with the saying, “You learn something new every day.” As teachers, we learn from our students as much as they learn from us.

Christopher Collins has taught physical education at Oak Hill Elementary School for the last five years. During that time, he has developed a reputation as a teacher who can quickly engage his students and keep them actively involved from the first minutes of class to the end. Recognized as an innovative leader, he has spearheaded initiatives to get the school a rock climbing wall and four Dance Dance Revolution systems. In past years he conducted an after-school rock climbing club, and this year he prepared the county’s first-ever after-school Dance Dance Revolution tournament – complete with trophies – for the top finishers. In only four years, he has helped the school raise more than $60,000 for the American Heart Association through its Jump Rope for Heart event. He is willing to go the extra mile for his students, even to the point of putting himself in a dunking booth at the school fair to raise money for special causes or having his head shaved by a second-grader to keep a fundraising incentive pledge.

When he’s not at Oak Hill, he can be found coaching Chesapeake High School’s varsity boys’ soccer team.
Lori Darnall
Old Mill Middle School South

“I want my students to understand that winning a game is not as important or rewarding as supporting both teammates and opponents alike. When someone falls, you help them up. When someone lags behind, you encourage them. Although someone is different, you include them in the game.”

A 17-year veteran teacher, Lori Darnall has been at Old Mill Middle School South since 1990. In that time, her philosophy has shifted from making her students better athletes to making them better people through athletics and physical education. Her classes are focused as much on sportsmanship as on athleticism, and she strives to make her students see “the value in winning and losing gracefully.” Her classroom, colleagues say, is a place athletes and non-athletes love to enter. Described as “energetic, enthusiastic, and devoted,” she has been the department chairman for the last four years.

In addition to her classroom duties, she organizes and coordinates the school’s Sport Day event, a schoolwide field trip to five different sports complexes. She also leads the Safe School Site Team, is a member of the Faculty Council and School Improvement Team, and is the IDT leader for the school’s Encore program.

Susie Dickey
Glen Burnie High School

“When I walk into a class, I do not want to feel that I am walking into a battlefield where it is me against them. We are in a partnership with a common goal – the acquisition and application of knowledge.”

Susie Dickey has spent all 29 years of her educational career at Glen Burnie High School. She taught Spanish from 1978 to 2005 and has been an AVID instructor for the last two years. She was the first Spanish teacher in Anne Arundel County to be trained as a National Pacesetter Trainer. This year, she serves as a demonstration teacher to first- and second-year AVID instructors. A teacher who has high standards for her students and herself, she demands the best from her students. She engages them in critical thinking exercises and encourages team building so that her students work well together not only in AVID classes, but in all their courses. She has been a key cog in moving Glen Burnie High School from an Affiliated AVID School to a Certified and Nationally-recognized AVID site. She also has helped students through the school’s AP Summer Academy and Student Success Bridge programs.

Daniel Fluharty
North County High School

“As a member of the educational community, my role as a teacher does not simply end as I walk out the door at the end of the day. I wear the title of teacher quite proudly in all aspects of my life.”

After spending the early part of his 11-year teaching career in New York, Daniel Fluharty has taught students in Anne Arundel County Public Schools since 2000. He has been Business Department chairman and Academy Instructor/Director at North County High School since 2003. In class, he has developed a reputation as someone who invokes creativity and goes the extra mile for students by exploring student employment possibilities with local businesses. Someone who can easily adapt to a variety of situations, he is a top-notch communicator who relates well to his students.

Outside of his work with students, he has developed several curriculum/pacing guides used by teachers throughout the county. In addition to his high school work, he has been an adjunct instructor at Anne Arundel Community College since 2001.
Marie Fries
Ruth Parker Eason School

“The success of my students and my success as a teacher are not measured by test scores, but by the 'little things' that I witness on a daily basis: imitating an action or vocalization, requesting a snack, feeding oneself with a spoon, using the toilet, playing appropriately with a toy, initiating social interaction with a peer.”

Marie Fries knew very early on she wanted to teach children with severe disabilities. Her younger sister had cerebral palsy and mental retardation. “This little girl, totally dependent and never saying a word, determined the direction my life would take,” she said. A special education teacher since 1984, Fries has taught preschool students with severe and profound disabilities at Ruth Parker Eason School since 1985. She has co-authored the resource book “Fifty Nifty Workjobs,” a guide to developing independent jobs for students with autism. Known as a committed and passionate teacher, she is dedicated not only to her students but to their families as well. She has been instrumental in devising workshops for preschool teachers that focus on autism. She also developed and ran an evening program to help siblings of students with severe disabilities cope with the challenges such a situation presents.

She also has volunteered with Hospice of the Chesapeake’s Camp Nabe, and organized the school’s Race For The Cure and Relay For Life teams.

Karen Garczynski
Hillsmere Elementary School

“We teachers must be willing to take the extra time and effort to develop lessons that will expand our students’ horizons, motivate them, and make learning fun. Everything we do or say, we must always ask ourselves, ‘How will this affect our students?’ ”

Karen Garczynski has spent all of her professional career at Hillsmere Elementary School and has taught first grade for the last eight years. Known for her patience and child-centered approach, she quickly endears herself to her students. She thinks of them as being “only limited in scope by their life experiences,” and derives her biggest pleasure from helping her students learn to read and write so they leave first grade with the desire and ability to learn on their own. A National Board Certified teacher, she also is a great resource for her colleagues. She has helped to create math curriculum pacing guides and math technology links for teachers and is a leader for her first-grade teaching teammates.

She sits on the Hillsmere School Improvement Team, routinely volunteers for night and weekend activities, and organizes the school’s annual Math Night. She has led several book discussions for the school’s staff and mentors new teachers.

Lydia Gonzalez
Woodside Elementary School

“Miss G excels at creating meaningful opportunities for her students. She is enthusiastic, flexible, and nurturing, which creates a sense of safety and trust within her classroom.”

Lydia Gonzalez has spent five of her eight years creating beautiful music with the students of Woodside Elementary School. A teacher who refuses to let music take a back seat to other academic subjects, she puts together a structured music program that allows students to develop not only their musical talents, but self-confidence and self-esteem as well. She believes music provides the opportunity for co-taught experiences. When her students made predictions about the Grammy Awards, she worked with classroom teachers to collect the data and create bar graphs. Teachers then used those graphs to create questions for which students had to provide brief constructed responses.

She has created several after-school programs at Woodside, including the Recorder Club, After-School Chorus, and the Drama Club. She also serves as a mentor teacher for new music teachers in the county.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Teacher Honorees

Finalist

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Teacher Honorees continued
Kristin Kyser
Bates Middle School

“I sincerely believe that all of my students have the abilities to achieve their dreams and I am dedicated to assisting them to get there. Positive and respectful relationships have been created with my students. Aside from being their teacher, I am their coach, cheerleader, counselor, and mentor.”

Kristen Kyser’s educational background is wide and varied. Before arriving at Bates Middle School in 2001, she taught in Pennsylvania, New York, and England. The daughter of a special education science teacher, she was exposed to the education field at an early age. She possesses the same drive that carried her father through his career: to make a difference in the lives of children. An AVID teacher since 2003, she has been a key part of the school becoming an AVID National Certified school. At the end of the 2005-2006 school year, 85 percent of her students headed to high school with a grade point average of 3.0 or higher.

Her energy and enthusiasm not only conveys to her students, but to her colleagues as well. She has worked to increase parental involvement at the school and has conducted several professional development sessions for teachers about successful AVID strategies.

Sandra LePori-Myers
Northeast High School

“I know every time a student receives an award, has a positive work evaluation, is offered a well-paying job, or chooses to further their education, I have received all the awards I will ever need.”

When one thinks of Business education at Northeast High School, it’s impossible not to think of Sandra LePori-Myers. For 42 years, she has been holding court at Northeast, helping to propel students forward to successful business careers. She has taught parents of many of her current students, and her familiarity with the community has helped the school forge many critical partnerships. In addition to chairing the Business Department, she is in charge of the school’s Office Systems Management program. The course of study provides students with a rigorous program at the school and Anne Arundel Community College and prepares them for internships with local businesses. Years after they graduate from Northeast, former students return to see their beloved teacher and maintain a relationship begun when they were teenagers.

Her influence on colleagues is equally far-reaching, and she goes out of her way to uplift teachers and students alike, especially in difficult times.

James Loach
Bates Middle School

“By the time school started this year, the word was out. Everyone once again wanted to be part of the music program at Bates. The band and orchestra have doubled in size and the jazz band rivals the high school band.”

James Loach has only been a part of Anne Arundel County Public Schools since 2005, but his impact has been deep and profound. He has used his musical talents and interests to teach his students about their larger responsibility within the community. At events such as “Come Together Annapolis,” the Bates Middle School Jazz Band members played in front of local government officials and people in the community to spotlight the problem of neighborhood violence.

He brings a wealth of various experiences to his field, having previously worked in law enforcement and the military. His practices and summer band camps are even attended by parents who want to learn from him.
Michelle Magee
Overlook Elementary School

“Her lessons always addressed the learning needs of her students. Every child in the class was treated as if he or she were the smartest child in the grade.”

Michelle Magee started her career in Anne Arundel County Public Schools working as a substitute teacher as she put herself through college. She has been a kindergarten teacher at Overlook Elementary School for the past two years and is now the primary lead teacher at the school. She believes she is preparing her students for the future, so she structures her classroom to allow for individuality, creativity, and choice.

Her principal, Maureen Irion, praised her for infusing “higher order questioning and higher order thinking skills into her presentations for children.” Parents Cheryl and Michael Baal added, “… educating our children is not just her profession, it’s her life and she embodies all that we as Americans hold dear in our hearts when we hear the word ‘teacher.’”

Carol Maid
George Fox Middle School

“My classroom is a safe place for my students to express themselves, to respect themselves and each other, and to find joy in learning.”

Carol Maid started teaching in Anne Arundel County Public Schools in 1986 as a substitute teacher before moving to Brooklyn Park Middle School full-time in 1990. She has served as the AVID teacher in grades 6 through 8 at George Fox Middle School since 2004. Under her leadership, the AVID program has become nationally certified at the school and has encouraged a new generation of students to become lifelong learners. She has co-developed “An Evening at the Arts” at George Fox Middle School, and is involved in Read Across America and Pennies for Patients.

She has enjoyed a long, successful, and varied teaching career in Maryland, Texas, Colorado, and Germany.

Catherine Mitchell
Freetown Elementary School

“A teacher is responsible for the child’s grades, behavior, and overall success. A good teacher is the one who has every child improving upon the skills that he or she already possesses, and gives them the ability and desire to increase their personal skill sets.”

Catherine Mitchell graduated cum laude from Towson University in 2001 and began teaching at Freetown Elementary School the same year. She serves the school as lead first grade teacher, primary lead teacher, and grade group liaison. She also has been the school’s Title I Extended Day Co-Director. She has a number of responsibilities at the school and does them all well. She is well respected by her peers and supervisors, who speak of her preparation, concern for students, involvement in the community, and skills in the classroom that, taken together, make her an outstanding educator. She welcomes visitors into the classroom and shares stories of student achievement. In doing so, she has been able to build a relationship with parents who have traditionally been hesitant to get involved in their child’s education.
Cary Moeller  
Windsor Farm Elementary School

“God made all of us special in our own way; but I feel God made Mr. Moeller especially for me as a fifth-grader, when I needed to believe in myself the most.”

Former student Brooke Walker wrote those words about his former teacher and said he wishes for him to “positively change the lives of other children as (he has) certainly done for me.” Cary Moeller began his teaching career in 1988 and has been a vital part of the Windsor Farm Elementary School staff since 1998. His impact has been so profound that parents and former students have written to tell of his positive impact in their lives. He was a trainer for Cooperative Learning Programs at The Center for Social Organization of Schools at The Johns Hopkins University and once served as an instructor for a graduate-level class there.

Because one of his priorities is strengthening the bond between home and school, He regularly calls parents to check on the students’ home life and head off any problems before they have a chance to develop.

Sonya Elizabeth (Liz) Muhitch  
Belvedere Elementary School

“I believe including literature studies in the kindergarten curriculum provides the children with a base of knowledge that helps them to become good readers and writers who use higher-level thinking skills to think outside the box.”

Liz Muhitch remembers rocking babies in her church nursery and thinking about how much she enjoyed spending time with children. That love has grown immensely in her 17 years of teaching, and her intellectual curiosity has grown along with it. She also desires to instill that passion in her students, believing that everyone should be a lifelong learner. As a kindergarten or early-childhood instructor since beginning her teaching career in New York in 1987, she has enjoyed helping to shape the educational careers and being the first teacher outside the family for hundreds of students. She was inspired to teach by her grandmother, who spent 46 years in a rural East Texas classroom. While she knows things have changed since her grandmother started teaching, she realizes that some things remain the same. Good literature, she said, is still the foundation for a good education and a lifetime of learning experiences.

Jason Muir  
Quarterfield Elementary School

“My main goal is for my students to leave class every day feeling they were safe, they had fun, they gained confidence, and they can’t wait to come back to school.”

Jason Muir’s students look forward to coming to his classroom every day to see what they will learn next. His creative lessons and positive energy make even the shyest child at ease and ready to learn and have fun. They also look forward to seeing him at a Family Fitness Night or Skate Night because they like being around him. A kindergarten teacher in Anne Arundel County Public Schools since 2005 after coming from Trenton, N.J., his deep roots here have helped him become a vital part of the community. His father and grandfather graduated from the United States Naval Academy and his family owned a popular eatery in Annapolis.

To connect his classroom to the community, he makes himself available to regularly attend sports functions, birthday parties, recitals, and other noteworthy functions of his students. He has so intricately woven personal details into his lessons that even the tragedy of losing his home in a fire became a kindergarten lesson on fire safety.
Sheila Norris
Tyler Heights Elementary School

“My greatest reward is the look on a child’s face, who has been working hard to master a skill or concept, when they finally ‘get it.’”

Sheila Norris has spent all eight years of her teaching career at Tyler Heights Elementary School. She has taught second grade and kindergarten, modeling her career after the educators she had as a child. Now, she’s the one making the impression on the children. She is the first teacher at her school to achieve National Board Certification. By staying and excelling at Tyler Heights Elementary School, she has demonstrated her personal commitment to providing a top-notch education to all students, regardless of their socio-economic status.

In addition, she has been in the Reading and At-Risk Students cohorts and taken postgraduate classes in School Improvement and Leadership at Goucher College.

Robin Parker
Pershing Hill Elementary School

“The true reward from teaching comes when I see a student’s smile after they have completed a task that they didn’t think they could do and wouldn’t have tried without my guidance and encouragement.”

Robin Parker began her teaching career in Caroline County in 1979. She has spent the last 22 years at Pershing Hill Elementary School in various capacities, including her current one as kindergarten through fifth grade reading teacher. A fourth-generation teacher, she learned patience and respect early in her career. Now, she has the respect of her principal, students, and their parents. By teaching reading skills and a love of the written word, she opens a whole new world for her students. She conducts two reading fairs each year to promote reading, works with other teachers to build an effective collaborative learning environment for the students, and reports and analyzes data as a member of the School Improvement Team.

Those who know her best rave about her patience, her dedication to her profession, and her desire to see all students succeed.

Jennifer Petrin
Old Mill High School

“Success is judged against one’s own ability, and growth determines that success.”

Art instructor Jennifer Petrin may be in the early stages of her career, but she has already had a dramatic impact at Old Mill High School and beyond. Last year, she was named High School Art Teacher of the Year in Anne Arundel County. She helped develop and write the International Baccalaureate art curriculum, and co-developed the Blackboard program for Advanced Placement Art History. She has traveled with students to Europe each of the past three summers and will be with a new group in Egypt this summer. She supervised the Skipjack project at Old Mill High School, which raised $2,600 for the art department last year.

Having entered teaching after working in the corporate world, Petrin has a fresh outlook and vigorous determination. She calls this her second career and first love. She is a candidate to become a National Board Certified Art teacher.
Linda Poole
North County High School

“A teacher with an outstanding personality who is open-minded with her students will always be the one to make a change and stand out amongst the crowd.”

Dr. Linda Poole has a wealth of teaching knowledge and experience in her almost 40-year career. She earned a bachelor’s degree from Towson State College in 1968 and immediately began teaching high school English in Virginia. She came to AACPS a year later and remained until 1988, when she moved to the college teaching level. She returned to Anne Arundel County in 2002 with a Ph.D. and is now the chair of the English department at North County High School. She won the award for Outstanding Service to Secondary Education from the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals in 1988. In addition, the annual M. Linda Poole Outstanding University Supervisor Award was created in her honor at The Johns Hopkins University.

In addition to all of her teaching and departmental management responsibilities, she is the school’s yearbook sponsor and has participated in the School Improvement Team, Department Council, English Vertical Team, and the Accreditation for Growth Committee.

Sarah Poole
Arundel High School

“The true reward is that teachable moment when time seems to stop and a teacher can look around at students caught up in the learning process.”

Sarah Poole began teaching U.S. government at Arundel High School in 2004, right after finishing a master’s degree from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. In the three years since then, she has also taught Advanced Placement U.S. Government, Constitutional History and Law, Advanced Placement Comparative Government and Politics, and Comparative Religions in addition to other similar courses. She is a two-time Arundel High School Teacher of the Year nominee and the winner of the MINT Small Grant Writer Award. In his nomination letter, a parent of one of her students said she deserves the award for her communication, enthusiasm, and competence.

She calls her own style an “optimistic view of education with an attempt to get all students to learn through a variety of techniques.” She is currently the Government Team Leader and has served previously on other committees.

Lisa Rose
Davidsonville Elementary School

“Students should have a positive attitude about school and learning from the very beginning of their lives to develop not only their knowledge and self-worth, but also the desire to learn more.”

A fourth-grade teacher at Davidsonville Elementary School, Lisa Rose didn’t always like her school. She said she was made to feel “dumb and worthless.” That’s why her classroom is a safe place for the children to discover their own learning styles, to experiment, and to not be made to feel uncomfortable if they don’t know each answer immediately. “It’s a safe place to fall,” she said. She came to Anne Arundel County eight years ago after serving in the U.S. Air Force as a computer programmer. Many of her teaching years have been spent in an “inclusive classroom” with special education students and support staff working together in mainstream settings.

She has been praised for her hands-on approach, the individual instruction time she spends with her students, and her unselfish attitude.
Valerie Smith teaches fifth grade at Woodside Elementary School and has been teaching in Anne Arundel County since 1999. She has been instrumental in helping students improve their math skills at Woodside. She has served as lead math teacher as well as chair of the Teacher Leaders Program – a program she developed for sharing instructional strategies in both reading and math so that teachers can immediately take the knowledge back to their classroom. She has also been nominated for the 2007 Maryland Council of Teachers of Mathematics Excellence in Teaching Award.

She has participated in several professional development leadership activities, including being featured in three professional training videos as a model educator of differentiation strategies in both reading and math.

Cynthia Sowells has been a fourth-grade teacher at Arnold Elementary School for more than six years. A 2005-2006 Disney Teacher of the Year nominee, she said she considers teaching to be an honor and a privilege and a profession that allows her to touch the lives of students through non-traditional methods of learning. For example, this fall, she used football trading cards to motivate students to create graphs of the height and weight of the players. The students had to also create a football field with the correct perimeter as well as draw the yardage to scale.

She also is a past chair of the school’s Student Achievement Committee, and is actively involved in community service with her family in the Broadneck area.

Erin Sullivan has been an ESOL teacher at Glen Burnie High School since 2004 and is one of only two ESOL teachers at the school. At the school, she has helped to develop several cutting-edge instructional programs including introducing “Fast Math” – a class that provides concrete, collaborative learning experiences to enable students to learn the academic language and mathematical concepts required in mainstream math classes. She also plans and facilitates a series of meetings for families of ESOL students, each on the topic that will help them support their children as they continue their education.

Community service is so important to her that she started an English club for men from Bosnia and Kosovo. She sets up tutorial meetings for the men and assists them in conversational English.
Charmain Sutherland
Severn Elementary School

“My belief is that for students to want to learn, the topic/skill/concept should capture their interests. It is on this premise that I base my teaching.”

Charmain Sutherland has 17 years of experience as a physical education teacher, including three years in her present position at Severn Elementary School. She also achieved National Board Certification status in 2006. She decided to become a teacher after taking tennis instruction to improve her game as a teenager. “This teacher gave me the skills and opportunities I would need for a lifetime,” she said. Since then, Sutherland has dedicated her life to teaching and physical fitness. She is the author of two textbooks: “PE Tips from the Trenches” – a guide designed for methods of teaching PE students and novices; and “No Gym? No Problem!” – a book of active complete lesson plans for all teachers who do not have a gym or large space to work.

In her spare time, she promotes free after-school clubs that students can attend, like tennis, track, football, and dance.

Deborah Tanner
Sunset Elementary School

“Physical education is an integral part of a child’s educational experience and will help a child grow beyond what can be realized in an academic classroom setting.”

Deborah Tanner has taught physical education in Anne Arundel County since 1977 and has mentored students at Sunset Elementary School since 1982. Influenced to enter the education field by her parents and the teachers and advisors who motivated her as a young child, she uses her classes to teach social skills such as respect, patience, sportsmanship, and teamwork. Described by colleagues as dedicated to students and their overall well-being, she adapts activities to meet the needs of every student. She is always looking to incorporate other areas of instruction into her classes, and never hesitates to step forward for schoolwide activities. She has been a frequent guest reader in classes, is an instrumental member of the school’s Cultural Arts Team, and has planned a schoolwide program called “Being Active Is Fun.”

Michael Tayman
Severn River Middle School

“I believe that it is best to be honest with students. It is important to get excited when they are learning and let them know when they are not. Teachers should be disappointed when students don’t try and be proud when they succeed.”

Michael Tayman has taught for 17 years in Anne Arundel and Baltimore counties and is in his fourth year at Severn River Middle School, where he is the school’s band and orchestra director. His groups have consistently earned superior and excellent ratings in county, state, and national festivals. He offers instruction to more than 250 students in his classes on all band and orchestra instruments. Principal Patrick Bathras nominated him, saying in his recommendation letter that “his passion is unquestionable and contagious.”

While teaching elementary instrumental music he established a partnership with the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra and has served as conductor of the Arnold and Annapolis area elementary school instrumental music festivals.
A second-generation teacher, Kevin Valenti has spent nine years teaching elementary education in Maryland, including six years at Quarterfield Elementary School. His mother was a first-grade teacher and his father, a retired high school English teacher, taught career development at Mount St. Mary’s College. Since 2000, he has guided the fourth-grade students at Quarterfield while working on his master’s degree in administration from McDaniel College. He currently has a perfect GPA of 4.0.

In 2006, he was selected to become a part of the first group of county teachers to be trained in multicultural education. He also served as a presenter at the 2005 and 2006 MSTA Teachers Conference on Action Research.

An kindergarten teacher at Brock Bridge Elementary School, Susan Wallis has spent more than 20 years of her career teaching kindergarten and special needs students. At Brock Bridge, he has served as a facilitator for the “Teach First” kindergarten team and has served as a faculty council representative for the team as well. Honored three consecutive times in “Who’s Who Among American Teachers,” she also is involved in community service and serves as a guest reader, field trip chaperone, or conference coordinator for the school.

As parent Sonya Sutter put it in her recommendation letter, “It warms my heart when I think of Susan Wallis. Her enthusiasm and upbeat personality are contagious.”

Megan Waters has spent four years at Southgate Elementary School teaching kindergarten and carrying on the teaching tradition she received from her mother, a first-grade teacher in New Jersey. “She would always share stories from her classroom,” she said. She now has plenty of her own. At Southgate, she focuses on the role that early childhood education can play in the development of a child.

She credits one of her greatest teaching accomplishments as working with a completely deaf student who had a cochlear implant. She had to ensure that the student’s environment was conducive to learning and had to educate herself about the implant. “I am proud that the year we spent together was a success and the young learner continues to thrive.”
Debra Ann Witt is a National Board Certified teacher at Lake Shore Elementary School, where she has taught since 1997. As a Primary Elementary Team Leader at Lake Shore, Witt says she tries to act as a resource for her fellow teachers and a role model for new teachers. She is also chairperson of the school’s Educational Management Team and has had the opportunity to help write curriculum for reading, math, science, and writing for Anne Arundel County Public Schools.

She has more than 1,000 hours of volunteer service at Chesapeake High School as president of the Choral Booster Organization. She is also founder of the Lake Shore Dance Troupe and has choreographed ten different pieces for more than 100 students in first through fourth grades.
Abundant Life Church

For more than seven years, members of the Abundant Life Church have dedicated time, energy and money to help our students, parents and staff at Hilltop Elementary School. They have donated school supplies. They have provided dinners for our families which are followed by academic workshops for parents and children taught by our teachers. The last dinner was attended by 200 people. As a result, our parents have become more involved in their children’s learning and the number of parent volunteers has increased in the school. Church members have also beautified the faculty room and faculty bathroom, as well as painted a beautiful mural in the school cafeteria. The energy and positive nature of their work has impacted all of us. Our lives and the lives of our children and families have been made happier through their generosity.

Nominated by Hilltop Elementary School

Cohen, Snyder, Eisenberg and Katzenberg

Since November, 2001, Mark Snyder has served as the intensely committed attorney coach of the Severna Park High School Mock Trial Team. Mark runs the practices from October to April with lofty expectations of our students. He accompanies the team to every trial at the Annapolis courthouse and his competitive spirit is contagious. As one student describes, “What Mr. Snyder does is teach. He empowers his students not just to repeat what he says but to learn the law for themselves, to engage in the legal system, to embrace the challenge presented and charge at it with the impassioned power of youth.” Mark has led the team through five consecutive Anne Arundel County Championships and the 2006 Maryland State Championship. Mark and his law firm have also offered the help of a second attorney, Henry Wegrocki who creates a unique and balanced teaching style for our students.

Nominated by Severna Park High School

Lake Shore Rotary

Every school looks for a community leader and Northeast High has found one in John Clark who is the Secretary and Scholarship Chairperson for the Lake Shore Rotary. Under Mr. Clark's direction, an Interact Club was created in collaboration with technology education teacher Carolyn Brunnett. Over 30 students are involved in the Interact Club and are examining school, community and international projects. Several activities have been conducted over the past year and include the production of planners for all 9th grade students, a successful food drive and toy collection for local families and Toys for Tots, and the organization of a St. Patty’s Day dinner. Through Mr. Clark’s leadership, the Lake Shore Rotary contributed financially toward the purchase of a new vehicle for a Northeast High teacher whose car had been vandalized. Northeast High School principal Kathy Kubic sees Mr. Clark as “having a true commitment to making a difference for students at Northeast High School”.

Nominated by Northeast High School
Old Country Buffet
For the last two years, Old Country Buffet has worked with the staff, students and community of Lindale Middle School to create incentives to enhance student learning and performance. Throughout the school year, students receive “Free Kids Meal” coupons to recognize achievements including: reaching reading goals, making the honor roll, being named Student of the Month, and even earning the top seller title in the school's PTA fundraiser. These ongoing incentives help to provide positive feedback to outstanding students at Lindale Middle School.

Nominated by Lindale Middle School

Richard’s Tree Care
It is never a surprise to see Christy or Richard Folderauer, owners of Richards’ Tree Care, helping someone do something on any given day. The Folderauers pitch in whenever and wherever they are needed. They support programs at Broadneck High School, Magothy River Middle School, and Cape St. Claire Elementary School. Their support ranges from providing a breakfast for students achieving honor roll and earning perfect attendance at the high school, to sponsoring the annual FUN RUN and providing equipment, manpower, and expertise for Chesapeake Day at the elementary school. It is impossible to calculate how many hours the Folderauers donate. They are truly generous and hardworking business partners in the Cape St. Claire school community.

Nominated by Cape St. Claire Elementary School

Strategic Resource Group
Five members of Strategic Resource Group (SRG) helped Meade Senior High School students prepare for the world of work. They taught four, 75-minute class sessions covering topics including: preparing for an interview, effective speaking, goal setting and career pathways. In addition to teaching students the nuts and bolts of the career search process, each volunteer also served as a mentor to individual classes and led students through a variety of activities including role-playing, resume writing, hand shaking and mock interviews. Having these professionals as mentors helped students at Meade Senior High prepare to move to the next level when they finish high school.

Nominated By Meade Senior High School
Businesses over 50 employees:

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.,
Delta Pi Omega Chapter
Since the fall of 2005, the members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. have been supporting the students and staff at Van Bokkelen Elementary School. They have donated school supplies and have helped them with their 2006 Harvest Festival by setting up craft and food tables. Currently they have purchased t-shirts for all the students to be worn during field trips and school spirit days. They share their love of learning by reading cherished literature to our students and encouraging them to spend time reading. They are committed to sharing good news and a positive image of Van Bokkelen Elementary School by submitting articles in their organization’s newsletter and have also submitted an article to the local newspaper.

Nominated by Van Bokkelen Elementary School

Booz Allen Hamilton
Since November, 2005, Phenesia Savoy has served as a role model and mentor for the Sisters-in-Action, an organization composed of 24 young ladies established to promote the success of diverse young women through attendance, character, community service and education. Phenesia meets with them monthly and encourages them to take challenging classes, get involved in school activities and explore the possibility of a college education. Phenesia also serves on the Old Mill High School Business Advisory Board and takes an active role in projects such as the Next Step Program and the eleventh grade Mock Interviews. She put together a team of young professionals who taught a lesson to all the eleventh grade students, preparing them for the mock interviews.

Nominated by Old Mill High School

Fiber Plus, Inc.
Fiber Plus, Inc. has worked hand-in-hand with Anne Arundel County Schools’ Technology Program for over a decade. The company hires its interns from the Academy of Information Technology at Chesapeake High which allows students to “test drive” a career in Information Technology. They also provide guest speakers, mentorships, tutoring, advising and job shadowing. Carl Strobel, President and the Fiber Plus employees donate hundreds of hours annually to the schools. The contributions of Fiber Plus have not only provided a strong, positive connection from the classroom to the business world, but the affiliation has also strongly affected the lives of the students throughout the school.

Nominated by Chesapeake High School
Johns Hopkins HealthCare LLC

Johns Hopkins HealthCare, a division of Johns Hopkins Medicine, is involved in a number of program partnerships with Pershing Hill Elementary, a school located on the Fort Meade base. Under the direction of Mrs. Maura Walden, Director of Corporate Training, Organizational Development and Community Relations at Johns Hopkins HealthCare, and Ms. Donna Pergerson, Pershing Hill principal, a Community Collaboration Committee was established. The committee evaluated and prioritized school needs, identified potential resources and developed strategies to work with the local business community. As a result of this effort, a number of initiatives were undertaken including the JHHC Staff Development Wellness Day at Pershing Hill Elementary that connected good health to improved students achievement. JHHC provided financial support for the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Program (PBIS) that rewards appropriate behavior rather than punish inappropriate behaviors. Student office referrals have gone from 42 during the first semester of the 2005-2006 school year to 0 for the first semester of 2006-2007, standardized test scores have risen, an effort recognized not only by the leadership at Anne Arundel County Public Schools but also by the Maryland State Department of Education. Principal Pergerson and her staff clearly see their collaboration with Johns Hopkins HealthCare as having a significant positive impact on the entire school community.

Nominated by Pershing Hill Elementary School

McDonald’s Corporation/McDonald’s Glen Burnie/Sun Valley

Marley Elementary instituted the Triple A Program—Academics, Attendance, Attitude—designed to reward students for performance, attendance and attitude. Through the efforts of Ms. Carla Williams, Manager, McDonald’s of Glen Burnie/Sun Valley has been instrumental in the success of this program by providing complimentary HAPPY MEALS as rewards for improvement in these areas. Ms. Williams and Ms. Holly DeWeese delivered the HAPPY MEALS directly to the students at Marley Elementary. McDonald’s also supported a school fundraiser at the restaurant and provided the characters Grimace and Hamburglar to greet the students. The fundraiser was the largest ever for Marley Elementary. McDonald’s also provides Attendance Reward Certificates that reinforce the importance of school attendance. The newest activity underway is the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports Program (PBIS) designed to reward students for good behavior. Plans are underway to bring Ronald McDonald to the school where he will provide the Character Education program. Principal Donna Williman plans to continue these initiatives and is grateful for the generosity of the McDonald Corporation and Carla Williams as well as the time commitment and energy of Ms. Holly DeWeese.

Nominated by Marley Elementary School

Northrop Grumman Corporation

The power one individual can have on a school community has been demonstrated by the energy and commitment of Steve Smalley. A manufacturing engineer with Northrop Grumman, he arrived at Glen Burnie High School with a project in mind—creating a video for Northrop Grumman that needed an audience! He partnered with the Engineering and Mechanical Information Technology cluster leader and invited students to an on-campus field trip in the computer science classroom. Following an engaging and informative PowerPoint presentation, students were directed to work in small teams, creating a ‘real-work’ atmosphere. Their challenge was to build a stable antenna using only uncooked spaghetti noodles, straws, spice drops and toothpicks. The winning structure was the tallest antenna that successfully held a CD for 20 seconds. Mr. Smalley has participated in Career Day, mock interviews and has become a member of the school’s Business Advisory Board. Nominators Jessica Paugh and Alice Shih describe Mr. Smalley as an “excellent resource for students, teachers and parents. He has been an outstanding support and resource to Glen Burnie High School”.

Nominated by Glen Burnie High School
Northrop Grumman Corporation

Christmas arrived in a big way at Marley Glen School thanks to the generosity of Northrop Grumman’s Christmas Project, an initiative that was directed by Bob Hodges and his wife Diane. As a school nominated by Northrop Grumman, The Hodges spoke with every teacher and most students and documented their wish lists. After hours and hours, the big day finally arrived. Mr. & Mrs. Hodges, Santa, and 50+ Northrop Grumman employees arrived at Marley Glen School in caravan style with a large bus followed by a number of private cars. Students stood outside with a welcoming banner with an excitement that was contagious. Each teacher was called to the front of the cafeteria to receive his or her classroom gifts as well as individual gifts for students. In addition, each student received a Christmas stocking filled with special surprises. Following a round of Christmas carols, $100 gift certificates were left with school personnel in the event that someone was not happy with the gift they had received. As if that was not enough, Northrop Grumman also purchased three large items for the Sensory Room at Marley Glen. The magical day ended with lots of hugs and well wishes by both school and Northrop Grumman staff and employees. The school’s social worker summed the partnership up with “although it was one activity, it was the love and energy that came through during their delivery of the gifts”.

Nominated by Marley Glen School

South County Faith-Based Coalition

The Portfolio Project was developed to address two identified student needs at Southern High School: engagement with adults and career focus. To address these needs, a steering committee was formed to design an adult/student partnership program. The result was the Portfolio Program - a program that brings adult volunteers from South County’s faith community to Southern High School to meet one-on-one with students in AVID classes. Volunteers join students in class every other week allowing them to develop relationships and create a portfolio which can be used not only for personal reflection but also for gaining jobs, scholarships and college admission. During the 2006-2007 school year, Southern High School’s Portfolio Program was expanded to all of the middle and high schools in Anne Arundel County.

Nominated by Southern High School

University of Maryland/North County Business Advisory Board

Under the leadership of Julie Judy from the University of Maryland, the North County Business Advisory Board is a collaboration of the efforts of over 50 companies to help support the North County feeder system. In existence for eight years, the board has created and sustained a variety of programming including Student of the Month recognition, an annual luncheon for successful middle school students, mock interviews for juniors, reading and mentoring programs, honor roll breakfasts, and scholarship funds for North County High School graduates. Somewhat unique in its mission, the North County Business Advisory Board serves the eight elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school in the North County feeder system, hoping to influence students in all stages of their education.

Nominated by North County High School
Judges for the 2007 Teacher of the Year

Sandra Anderson, Comcast
Duane Arbogast, Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Richard Benfer, Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County
Susan Casler, 2006 Public School Teacher of the Year
Hilary Humphrey, Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Charmaine Lawrence, Marley Station
Patricia McKenna, University of Maryland University College
Diane Pastrana, 2006 Private School Teacher of the Year
Diana Strohecker, Association of Educational Leaders

Judges for the 2007 Business Partnership Awards

Sandra Anderson, Comcast
Kathleen Beauman, Anne Arundel Community College
Lise Foran, Anne Arundel County Public Schools

The Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce’s Education Committee members would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Don Cramer and the Design/Print team and Bob Mosier and the Public Information Office team for their time, talents, energy and support of this event and tonight’s program. We are very grateful for their dedication to the educators of Anne Arundel County.
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