2012 Excellence in Education Awards

Monday, April 16, 2012
BWI Marriott Hotel
Linthicum Heights, Maryland
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.
2012

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS

Awards for

Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Teacher of the Year

Anne Arundel County Private Schools
Teacher of the Year

Anne Arundel County
Business Partnerships of the Year
Reception/Registration – 6:00
A time for fellowship with colleagues and friends

Seating for Dinner – 6:30
Welcome & Greetings
Brad Bell, Maryland Reporter, ABC7/WJLA-TV
Master of Ceremonies

Dinner – 6:45

Awards Ceremony – 7:30
Honoring Educators
Andrew C. Pruski, Vice-President, Board of Education
Kevin M. Maxwell, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools
Bob Burdon, CEO, Annapolis & Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce

Recognizing Excellence
Brad Bell, Maryland Reporter, ABC7/WJLA-TV
Jillian P. Buck, Student Member
Anne Arundel County Board of Education

Presentation of the 2012 Teacher Honorees

2012 Public School Finalists
Raven Bishop, Severn River Middle School
Martha Gardner, Belvedere Elementary School
Mikki Loiselle, Pershing Hill Elementary School
Julie Olson, Nantucket Elementary School
Scott Rundle, Broadneck High School
2012 Private School Finalists
Patricia Brett, Monsignor Slade Catholic School
Vicki Dabrowka, Eagle Cove School
Catherine Hellie, Archbishop Spalding High School

Promoting Partnerships
Presentation of Business Partnership Nominees and Awards

Presentation of the Teacher of the Year Award
2012 Anne Arundel County Private Schools Teacher of the Year

2012 Anne Arundel County Public Schools Teacher of the Year

Closing
Anne Arundel County Public Schools Finalists

Raven Bishop
Severn River Middle School

“It has been said that teachers are the gatekeepers to a child’s success. I disagree. I believe that good teachers are bridge-builders, constructing structures and supports that open each learner’s pathway to achieving his or her highest potential. Bridge-building is making real and lasting connections – and this, more than anything, is what teachers do.”

With a love for visual art, dance, theater, and music, Raven Bishop has set the bar high for all the aspiring artists extraordinaire who she’s influenced in her seven years of teaching. Before joining Severn River Middle School, she brought vivid, artful colors to the canvases of Jessup Elementary School by earning grants for art extension projects that also helped her run the school’s dance company, direct the school musical, and coordinate a student talent showcase and evening of the arts. She helped form and now oversees the National Junior Art Honor Society chapter at her current school.

Sharing her talents with the community as well, Bishop volunteers for the Creating Communities Arts Mentorship Academy as a dance mentor artist and helps to design and paint murals in highly visible, civic spaces. She also contributed to an international service learning project in Botswana.

“My work in the community has allowed me to connect with professional artists who have visited my school to speak about their careers and worked with students on community service projects,” she explains. “This connects my students to the world beyond the classroom through the classroom – giving them face-to-face access to role models, allowing them to see themselves as leaders within their community and empowering them as a powerful force for positive change.”

Bishop also serves as a member of the Maryland Art Education Association Executive Council, and is a National Board Certified teacher.

Martha Gardner
Belvedere Elementary School

“If you are part of my life, you are family… I get butterflies at the beginning of each school year in anticipation of the new class of learners about to join me on a yearlong adventure. I am excited to see their faces on the first day. These smiling uncertain people don’t know it yet, but they have just met the newest member of their family – me.”

Martha Gardner has taken a maternal approach to being a teacher. That means in her 32 years of instructing young people, she’s grown quite a family. More importantly, however, it has allowed her to develop meaningful relationships that last beyond her one-year engagements with students.

One project that she uses to stay connected involves having her fifth-graders write letters to the 21-year-old versions of themselves. She holds onto the letters and then mails them 11 years later in the hopes that they will still learn something from her.

“It gives them a chance to look back, to see if they had changed their aspirations and hopes along the way, or if they stayed on the track they had predicted,” she says.

Beyond the commitment she pours into the classroom, Gardner fervently shares her talents with young people at the Children’s Theater of Annapolis (CTA). Having participated in staging more than 25 productions by the organization and leading the effort to build a $2 million theater, she has found even greater fulfillment and more family members.

“My passion for theatre is profound. I have found with CTA an outlet for this passion. Working to create an environment where children have an opportunity to express themselves in a safe, nurturing place is very rewarding,” she explains. “Spending time with the 12- to 18-year-olds gives me a different perspective than I have during my day.”
Mikki Loiselle  
Pershing Hill Elementary School

"Mrs. Loiselle is positive in building working relationships with the students, parents, and school community with the ultimate goal to improve the outcomes of the students… From facilitating extracurricular activities, calling and writing parents, to creating educational and social opportunities for students to identify what is unique about themselves, Mrs. Loiselle reaches everyone she meets and teaches." – Principal Tashaka Green

Inspired by the work of Dr. Seuss, Mikki Loiselle has three tenets of teaching that have led to much success over her 21-year career as an elementary teacher. From using additional, outside resources to create a diverse and adventurous classroom, she takes students on journeys of discovery that are as fascinating as their literary catalysts.

“The sign above my door should read: ‘Welcome to Seussville… Think and wonder. Wonder and think,’” she says.

With the help of community experts from various fields of industry and study, she teaches her students about seeking answers to their questions in the right places while building a community of learning. For example, she and her students integrated sign language into their daily routine this year and invited an advocate from Deaf-REACH to join the class to teach them.

Intent on making learning an adventure, Loiselle, a National Board Certified Teacher, believes in experiential learning. Beyond the classroom, she established the school’s E³ (Expose, Explore, and Experience) program to expand the experiences of her entire school community. Nearly 700 students, staff, parents, high school student volunteers, and business partners participate in the program’s quarterly mini-courses.

“E³ encourages both successful and struggling students to try new things through further exploration of topics that didn’t fit compactly into the county-wide curriculum,” she says.

Julie Olson  
Nantucket Elementary School

“I am constantly striving for excellence and my teaching philosophy is aligned with this principle. As such, it is not only my responsibility, but also my sincere desire to increase student learning, involvement, enjoyment, and achievement in music.”

National Board Certified Teacher and 12-year veteran Julie Olson describes the instruction she delivers to more than 215 students each day as “rich and rewarding.” With a focus on rigor and relevance, she formulates the student experience to include a vast exposure to the joys of music. In addition to simply challenging her students in the classroom, she also seeks to instill a love for music that will last past their elementary school days.

“It is my hope that this rich exposure to music at an early age will serve as a firm foundation for a life of music appreciation and participation,” she says. “I am heartened to learn of several former high school students who have gone on to become music educators while many others continue to perform in musical ensembles as adults.”

Although her passion for music is strong, her strength, perhaps, lies in her well-balanced personality. Bringing warmth to her classroom with a perpetual smile and enthusiasm, she is known to “blend drama, humor, sincerity, and high expectations” in a magical way that yields achievement and affection for music.

“Students who have never had an interest in music, after being taught by Mrs. Olson, are often involved in private lessons, music camps, and theatrical productions,” says Principal Diana Strohecker.
Scott Rundle
Broadneck High School

“Challenge students. Expect success from them. Motivate them. Engage them. Entertain them. Push and prod them. Support and help them. Believe in them. Expect and require integrity from them. Be firm and fair with them. Instill a desire for progress in them. Explain to them. Be patient with them. Be human with them. Share a piece of yourself with them. Joke and laugh with them. Care about them. Be a role model for them. These are some of the characteristics I believe define a great teacher, and they are things that I strive to do with and for my students every day.”

National Board Certified Teacher Scott Rundle has navigated the life of a high school math educator for 20 years by holding true to a simple belief: “… all students can make substantial progress if they are challenged and motivated by their teacher.”

He stays firm to that belief by presenting a professional, organized classroom and creating excellent rapport with his students. Setting high expectations for himself and, in turn, his students, Rundle goes the extra mile to support students who show a desire to do their best.

“If a student is willing to make the commitment to learn and improve, then I feel it is my calling to help them achieve their goals by assisting them any way I can, whether it be extra help sessions or just listening to their problems.”

Rundle also seeks to be a role model for his students by sharing his musical interests with them and advising a volunteer group at his school. He has played trumpet with the Anne Arundel Community College Symphony Orchestra and his church choir, showing his students one way to have a positive impact on the community. In addition, his students get to make their own impression on the community through his leadership as an advisor for his school’s Habitat for Humanity Club.

Known as a positive leader, he is also revered as an ardent supporter and mentor to his peers.
Patricia Brett
Monsignor Slade Catholic School

"In my humble opinion, I know that Mrs. Brett is completely deserving of this title…. but in my heart… she already is." – Linda C. Morris, former parent in Mrs. Brett’s class

Patricia Brett’s initial reason for becoming a teacher came about in the fourth grade: She simply wanted to write on the chalkboard. Then, she would find herself “holding class” for her friends and younger sister to amuse herself in the summertime. When she got to high school, she joined the Future Teachers of America group, through which she enjoyed helping in the classrooms at local elementary schools.

Through those experiences, a teacher was born. “I have never wondered ‘what if’ I had not gone into teaching,” she says. “I have been told that I am a ‘natural teacher’ by various people… Parent volunteers in my classroom often state that they do not know how I do it. I ‘do it’ because I love my job.”

With more than 29 years in the classroom, Brett has managed to love more than just her profession by touching and guiding hundreds of fragile first-graders on the journey to proficient reading.

Brett is acknowledged by her peers for being extremely organized and dependable. She has held several leadership roles at her school, including faculty council representative, co-chair of the reaccreditation committee, and a member of the Archdiocese of Baltimore teacher forum.

Vicki Dabrowka
Eagle Cove School

“… when I think of accountability in the teaching profession, I envision ‘teaching’ as the companion to ‘learning’… Just like you can’t have multiplication without division, I feel you cannot continue to teach without first continuing to learn.”

Specializing in all things environmental, Vicki Dabrowka is a green teacher on a mission to reconnect our technologically-obsessed youth back to Earth. While upholding the exceptional delivery of a rigorous third-grade curriculum, Dabrowka, a 20-year teaching veteran, also makes her message of global responsibility clear.

“It is also my belief that our long-term global success will depend on educating our youth to become environmental stewards,” she says.

To accomplish that, her classes perform various activities like maintaining an extensive recycling/upcycling program; writing persuasive letters to delegates; generating computerized graphs of annual trash per capita by country; researching endangered animals; and embarking on outdoor iPad quests solved by mathematical riddles.

“It is through activities such as this that my students can come to see that every individual action, no matter how small, can make a big difference,” she explains.

She knows, however, that in order to reach a large audience with her message she must speak their language as well. In doing so, Dabrowka uses social media and a blog to sprout interest in environmental education. With more than 62,000 hits on her site since February 2010, Dabrowka has helped her fellow educators become environmental role models for their students and communities.
Having struggled to be academically successful and to learn concepts quickly as a youth, Catherine Hellie has a heightened sensitivity to diverse learning abilities. Thankfully, through the encouragement and positive reinforcement of her tenth-grade English teacher, Hellie developed confidence and found a model by which she addresses foreign language instruction in her own classroom today.

“Mrs. Brill didn’t spend all her time and energy praising the ‘naturally talented’ of my class, but instead chose to use some of her knowledge to help me become even better,” she says. “As an effective educator I am not only characterized by the knowledge of content that I teach, but most importantly by the example I become to my students.”

Hellie serves as the foreign language department chairperson and therefore chooses which classes she will teach. She consistently chooses to teach the classes with the largest enrollment and those with the most challenging learners.

“Those students are fortunate to have an inspirational teacher, a teacher who does not give up on any single student, and who spends the time making sure they are educated… she willingly and lovingly spends her time in the ‘trenches,’” says Principal Lewis Van Wambke.
Mary-Jo Bedsworth
Lake Shore Elementary School

“I believe that not only do I teach my students, but I believe they can also teach me as we move through our lessons together. My acceptance of each of them, in turn, becomes their acceptance of me, and together we can move forward and achieve many ‘aha’ moments in our daily learning experience.”

With more than 32 years of her life dedicated to teaching young people in schools and at her church, Mary-Jo Bedsworth is an education professional in every sense. Her respect for the talents and potential in children has been a primary key to her success, especially as a special education teacher.

“Every child who enters my classroom has the right to be successful, and more importantly, to feel successful,” she says.

Bedsworth also uses that respect as a foundation for Lake Shore Elementary School’s Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program, which she initiated in 2008. In her role as the leading motivator of PBIS, she not only models exemplary conduct for her students, but also her colleagues.

The other major tenet of Bedsworth’s approach to educating young people is comfort. While maintaining order in her classroom, she creates a learning atmosphere that eases students and breaks down their inhibitions.

Bedsworth also has a background in music and supports the school by providing piano accompaniment for the school chorus. She also is the director of music at a church in Severna Park.

Keri Farrish
Central Elementary School

“This year our teachers were asked to give input on Central Elementary School’s nominee for Teacher of the Year. The staff overwhelmingly selected Keri Farrish. Her commitment to children and the greater school community is evident… she touches many more students than the 26 in her class every year.” – Principal Jan Haberlein

Despite her relatively short time as a teacher, Keri Farrish has taken the students, staff, and parents of Central Elementary School to new heights with her professionalism and enthusiasm. In nearly six years, she has earned teaching’s highest credential as a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT), serves as the school’s Lead Social Studies Teacher, and is a Thinking Maps trainer for her peers.

While her professional accomplishments have allowed her to assume leadership roles and build key relationship with her colleagues, Farrish has been equally committed to fostering positive relationships with her students. She makes personal engagement a key component of instruction to forge a connection that compels students to be accountable and excited about learning. To make sure that she reaches the “whole child,” she eagerly volunteers to support students and learn more about them through extracurricular activities such as Girls on the Run, Black History Club, Financial Literacy Club, 24 MRH Club, and the Green School Committee.

“Developing mutual respect and genuine caring encourages students to move outside of their comfort zones and stretch themselves to their fullest potential,” she explains.

Farrish was part of a small contingency of NBCTs from the county to visit the White House in December and take part in a roundtable discussion at the U. S. Department of Education.
Donald Foderaro
North County High School

“I feel tremendous pride when students share with me that they prevented a friend from drinking and driving, or they stood up for a person who was being bullied. I feel that I make a difference, and I help my students feel that they are making a difference as well. Working with the health and physical education curriculums, I am able to help my students learn life skills that will improve my students’ lives directly and often immediately.”

As a ten-year veteran and National Board Certified Teacher candidate, Donald Foderaro is not only a leader among his peers at North County High School, but also a role model for his students. As a football and wrestling coach, he uses his highly-visible positions to promote bullying prevention. Foderaro started the Don’t Hate Collaborate Club at his school, an initiative which led to the first anti-bullying week program at North County. Showing further support for the initiative, he ran the Baltimore Marathon to raise funds to sponsor a motivational speaker and other activities for Don’t Hate Week.

“Coach Fod has an immeasurable impact on North County as students not only look to him as an example for living, but also as a mentor and confidante,” says Principal Bill Heiser. “He is an invaluable resource at our school as he builds academic culture through cultivating relationships with a diverse group of students.”

The former scholar athlete is also able to relate to the academic challenges currently presented by the increased demands for rigor and more graduation requirements. As a coach he sets high standards for his student athletes, but also serves as a mentor teacher for struggling students.

“Relating to my students in a professional manner, I share personal situations that have affected my life,” he says. “I allow for open and respectful communication in class with a conscious grasp of self-disclosure… Respect is at the core of collaborative and positive relationships.”

Catherine Hayo
Arnold Elementary School

“When I first started teaching, I needed the support of my administrator and other talented educators to guide me through the struggles many first-year teachers face. As I developed my own style, I became more comfortable and confident in my abilities. Soon, I began to open my classroom for others to learn from me.”

As is the case with most educators, fourth-grade teacher Catherine Hayo adheres to a mantra of lifelong learning. Inspired by the Albert Einstein quote, “Learning is not a product of schooling, but the lifelong attempt to acquire it,” Hayo roots instruction on relevant and current circumstances that require constant personal development.

“Through my own learning opportunities, I continue to seek ways to bring new ideas into my classroom and share with my students the importance of lifelong learning,” she says. “Valuing the importance of technology, I continue to educate myself to keep up with these changes. This year alone, I learned how to create a classroom website and blog, again proving to my students that I am a lifelong learner.”

While she takes advantage of the AACPS professional development curriculum, she also pursues outside experiences to bring unique ideas to her classroom and to share with her peers. Having served as a general, special, and gifted and talented educator, the 27-year veteran uses her broad experience to support fellow teachers and provide varied instruction.

As the first and only National Board Certified Teacher candidate at her school, she also seeks to expand her knowledge and expertise to the greatest benefit of her students and colleagues.
Anne Arundel County Public Schools Semi-Finalists

Sabra Hill
Severna Park High School

"Because they know excellence does not come easily, the best teachers encourage students — teaching them not to fear mistakes, but instead to reflect on successes and failures, then revisit, revise, refine. We are all students, ultimately, all through life. Sometimes we struggle, sometimes we don't, but we are always learning."

Having achieved National Board Certification, Sabra Hill applies the techniques of the reputable program – Rethink, Revise, Reflect – as a guide for her students to be high achievers in her English classes. Focused equally on developing clear writing, critical thinking, and careful reading skills, the 18-year veteran offers a balanced writing program for all learners.

“I believe a good teacher does more than simply evaluate student writing to determine what they know,” she explains. “A good teacher realizes that writing is a way of learning, one that allows students opportunities to create, to explore, to discover. It helps them to become more reflective and to better understand their own thoughts.”

Hill also uses technology to help accomplish her instructional goals. Through Storybook software, her students are charged with publishing and presenting an illustrated soliloquy using a passage from literature and updating it with their own content, music, images, and style.

“As a mentor to others in the department, she willingly shares ideas, supplies, and lessons with anyone who asks her,” notes Principal Patrick Bathras.

A published writer in her own right, Hill has served as an editor and writer for local publications, Kids Directory and Chesapeake Children’s Magazine.

Sarah Jester
Northeast High School

“… I use my passion for music to inspire my students over the hills and mountains they may encounter. I want them to be excited about learning and I, myself, must exhibit this characteristic. In order to keep the enthusiasm up, I am well prepared and energized. My classroom moves at a fast pace so that students never know what to expect, in turn, keeping them tuned into my every move.”

Sarah Jester can’t get enough of music, and she shares her love with as many people as possible. She’s taught music in the classroom for more than a dozen years in AACPS while also serving as the Director of Music for her church for almost that long. She has also managed to use her double major in music education and vocal performance to maintain a private studio for voice lessons.

Yet while her passion is evident, Jester has a humbling respect for teaching, no matter the subject, as a profession. Obtaining National Board Certification is a testament to the consummate educator she hopes to be to her students. She simply uses her talents to make her point.

“Students thrive in my classroom because I get to know them through developing relationships using music as a vehicle,” she says. “Through the study of music, I begin to understand what makes my students tick, what they like, what they dislike, and how they learn.”

As if her many positions were not enough to spread her joyful noise, Jester is also the primary advisor for her school’s theater productions and recently became the department chair for her subject.

“She built a once almost extinct program into a foundation of our school as evidenced by the quadrupling of student enrollment and plethora of new student performance events,” exclaims Principal Kathy Kubic.

honorees continued
Anne Arundel County Public Schools Semi-Finalists

Sandi Lemoncello
Marley Elementary School

“...my teaching philosophy stems from words my first principal said to me, ‘These children don’t need sympathy, they need someone who believes in them, understands them, and will give them a chance.’ Those words went straight to my heart.”

The word “compassionate” does not begin to describe how deeply Sandi Lemoncello feels for her students and school community. Throughout her 14-year career, she has made it a point to serve in areas where she felt she was needed the most.

“I have always worked in Title I schools,” she says. “I chose this path because although their needs may be more obscure and more difficult to deal with, I believe that in Title I schools you can find the children who have been ‘silenced.’ These are the children who deserve a chance and a voice. I have chosen to be their voice.”

With a focus on stability, organization, and safety, she creates a classroom where everyone can be heard. Intent on instilling confidence by providing instruction that encourages risk taking and problem-solving, Lemoncello has taken esteem-building for her students a step further. In 2010, she established the Marley Boys (Bright, Responsible, Young Men with Goals) program, aimed at bringing positive role modeling to at-risk boys at the school.

“More than half of our Marley Boys are proficient or advanced, with several students improving their scores on topic tests and benchmarks from basic to proficient this year,” says Principal Nina Lattimore. “This is proof that relationships matter. When students feel loved and supported, there is no telling how well they can excel.”

Emily Miller
Annapolis Middle School

“Every work of art that is created allows my students to include a part of themselves. When creating work inspired by other artists or cultures, students are encouraged to relate their newly acquired knowledge to their own experiences and have that reflected in their work. This not only makes their work more personal, but it also allows me to learn about the lives of my students and foster stronger relationships with them, which is key to student engagement and achievement.”

Emily Miller is an artist who just so happens to also be a teacher. Her classroom is a studio open to creative and exploratory experiences that help students make personal connections to themselves and the world through visual artistry.

“Every student is an artist in my class, although they may not be aware of this when they first enter art class,” she admits. “By providing opportunities to experiment with a variety of media and methods, I help my students build confidence in learning new skills and find their own unique style.”

Beyond the benefits of the visual arts as a form of personal expression, Miller uses the subject as another means to promote student achievement, critical thinking, and open-mindedness for issues that affect the global community. Each year, her students create artwork and participate in a project to support a local charity. They have raised more than $500 for a homeless shelter and $1,000 for the victims of the earthquake in Haiti over the last two years. She also got her students involved with the Tunnels of Love Project which resulted in the painting of a mural at the Edwards Pavilion of the Anne Arundel Medical Center last year.

“By participating in these projects, students not only shared their work, but they also learned how to use their talents and strengths to better their community,” she says.
Anne Arundel County Public Schools Semi-Finalists

Mary Rathlev
Severn River Middle School

"Mrs. Rathlev's dedication to the profession and to her students, her willingness to go well beyond the call of duty, and her exceptional love of teaching and for mathematics, make her a valuable member of the Severn River team." – Principal June Eyet

As a career changer, Mary Rathlev's previous experience as a pediatric nurse has allowed her to focus on individual student needs while promoting overall achievement in her classroom.

"As a pediatric nurse, I always recognized children as children first; I referred to them by name, not by their diagnosis," she says. "As a middle school teacher, I continue to see children as children first. I don't label them by the level of math they take or their MSA scores."

Such sincerity has allowed her to make a seamless transition after giving 27 years of her life to the health-care profession. She has already managed to give the young people of Anne Arundel County a decade of solid instruction as well – all because of one simple fact that she realized when she was five years old: She loves math.

"After dinner, if I am not reading a good book, I am perusing math journals and the Internet, looking for different ways to teach children math," she says, but also looks "for different ways for children to teach themselves math. I believe you should never tell students something they can discover themselves. I want to develop critical thinkers."

In addition, Rathlev has served for the past five years as a faculty advisor to the National Junior Honor Society at Severn River, where 50 to 60 students contribute more than 1,500 hours of community service each year.

Katie Williams
Linthicum Elementary School

"When I began teaching, I described what I thought would make a good teacher. It wasn't until I realized that I should be describing my students and not myself, that I started to become the teacher I always envisioned."

A classroom of camaraderie and empowerment is the ideal setting for Katie Williams to help students thrive. The 15-year veteran combines guidance, inspiration, and love with her vast knowledge to support the success of her students – all of whom she treats as unique learners.

"Believing that all children can learn is a simple philosophy, but one which requires true dedication and a desire to be a part of something amazing," she says.

Such commitment is demonstrated by the various classroom activities with which she engages students. With precise organization and a succinct schedule, her classroom is consistently abuzz with cooperative learning activities, learning centers, student choice, self-monitoring techniques, flexible grouping, and technology.

Having recently assumed the challenge of teaching third grade after teaching first grade for 12 years, Williams thought she would have to make major adjustments to reach the older group of students. Her fears quickly dissipated as she realized her approach is as flexible as the tools she uses to keep her students excited about learning.

Williams has also made an impact beyond her classroom by serving as her school's eCoach and Primary Lead Teacher. In such roles, she has paved the way for her colleagues to meet the technological demands of instructing today's electronic-savvy youth.
Ferhat Avsar
Chesapeake Science Point Public Charter School

Grades: 9 & 10
Subject: Mathematics
Teaching Experience: 7

“Teaching is a lifelong learning process about new philosophies and new strategies – learning from parents and community, learning from colleagues, and especially learning from the children.”

Wylma Bagshaw
Oakwood Elementary School

Grades: 1-5
Subject: Mathematics
Teaching Experience: 29

“I have the responsibility each and every day to build and sustain positive relationships with each student so that he or she feels valued and welcomed in my class… I want to communicate to my students that I expect their best efforts and that I will never give up on them.”

Michael Barnhart
Glendale Elementary School

Grades: 1-5
Subject: Mathematics
Teaching Experience: 13

“…my sincerest hope is that students leave my school recognizing that math makes sense, and that it makes sense of our world. Their attitudes shouldn’t be resistant or fearful of failure, but open to see how their lives interact so much with it.”

Sherryl Barton
Broadneck Elementary School

Grade: 2
Subject: Elementary
Teaching Experience: 19

“I am careful to show my students each day how much they are valued and appreciated… As they begin to see that the classroom is not mine, but ours, their enthusiasm and pride soar.”

Barbara Bollino
Marley Middle School

Grade: 7
Subject: Language Arts
Teaching Experience: 8

“All good teachers that I have observed have made great teaching seem effortless to them and sort of an innate ability. I have learned over the years that, just as with any other skill, the key to becoming a good teacher is to want to become one.”
Terrilyn Broderick
Glen Burnie High School

Grades: 9-12
Subject: Business/Computer Science
Teaching Experience: 14

“I believe the classroom setting is very important… My classroom must be very warm, safe, and inviting to my students. I try to include items in my classroom from all of the cultures that my students represent.”

Allyson Cabradillas
Millersville Elementary School

Grade: 2
Subject: Elementary
Teaching Experience: 10

“In order to successfully implement meaningful curricula and assist learners in reaching their fullest potential… we must be prepared to continuously examine, discuss, evaluate and change our teaching practices - accepting a greater responsibility for both professional and personal growth.”

Kimberly Cahill
Odenton Elementary School

Grades: K-5
Subject: Reading
Teaching Experience: 9

“I have heard many people say that teaching can be a lonely profession… However, if we take that stand, then we also start to lose our stance of becoming lifelong learners. I have valued the opportunities…to learn from my administration, my colleagues, my students, and the on-going educational opportunities offered within my county.”

Elaine Cechak
Broadneck High School

Grades: 9-12
Subject: Library Media
Teaching Experience: 15

“As a teacher library media specialist, I have four roles that are fundamental: information specialist, teacher, instructional partner, and program administrator. The mission of the library can only be accomplished through the performance of these four roles; however, I believe that my role of teacher takes priority.”

Michelle Colaric
Belvedere Elementary School

Grade: Kindergarten
Subject: Early Childhood
Teaching Experience: 6

“The children know that I believe in each one of them and their abilities. They are, therefore, able to take risks with their learning. They also see how much I love teaching and this helps them to develop a passion for learning themselves.”
Anne Arundel County Public Schools Teacher Nominees

**Kelly Dillon**
Mayo Elementary School

Grade: 3  
Subject: Elementary  
Teaching Experience: 17

“I think the relationship you build and create with students is the most important part about teaching… My first thought every day is ‘Be kind, I may or may not know what battle is going on in my students’ heads today.’”

**Brenda Duerr**
Community-Based Services

Grade: Pre-school  
Subject: Special Education  
Teaching Experience: 22

“We never stop learning! Ultimately, my teaching philosophy is simple. I do whatever an individual needs to learn… I first examine what I know about the learner/situation then use all the tools in my ‘bag of tricks’ to provide the most effective outcome possible.”

**Sherrita Evans**
Frank Hebron-Harman Elementary School

Grade: 5  
Subject: Elementary  
Teaching Experience: 9

“I know I’m doing my job well when my students are communicating their understanding of information learned. I know I’ve done an outstanding job when they are inspired to learn more and seek opportunities to do so.”

**Nellie Fastige**
Arnold Elementary School

Grade: 3  
Subject: Elementary  
Teaching Experience: 27

“I know that I have done my job as a teacher when I have been invited to a high school graduation of a student, a student emails me and states how I motivated her to become a teacher… and when others take the time to locate and visit me at another school to tell me how I was important to their lives.”

**Amanda Finnis**
Severna Park Elementary School

Grade: 5  
Subject: Language Arts/Social Studies/Science  
Teaching Experience: 14

“Each child who enters a classroom is a precious seed. It is my responsibility to water all of the seeds, to give them the attention they need… I need to challenge my students and encourage them to grow.”
Christopher Graulich  
Riviera Beach Elementary School  
Grade: 5  
Subject: Math/Science/Social Studies  
Teaching Experience: 15

“I believe before a student will truly be able to learn to their full potential they need to feel they belong… At the beginning of every year, I introduce the students to ‘our’ class. I like to stress how ‘we’ do things. This starts the connection.”

Sharon Mabbott  
Southgate Elementary School  
Grades: K-5  
Subject: Elementary Reading  
Teaching Experience: 42

“My birth children told me after they had become adults that they weren’t always happy to hear me refer to my students as my children. That is how I think of my students and just like my own children they remain mine forever.”

Monica Mantegna  
Lindale Middle School  
Grades: 6-8  
Subject: Special Education  
Teaching Experience: 6

“The job of teaching is not just a job – it is a calling that I take very seriously. As a career changer, I have had extensive experience in several other professions, but have always known that teaching struggling students is what I was meant to do.”

Laurie Marlow  
Severna Park Middle School  
Grades: 6-8  
Subject: Special Education  
Teaching Experience: 26

Throughout my 26 years of teaching, I have attended many of my students’ Special Olympic events, dance recitals, plays, sporting events, etc. The feeling that comes from seeing the looks of pure elation on their faces when they see you in the audience… is indescribable. Having a genuine connection with the whole child, not just their academic persona, is integral to helping them become confident, thriving learners.”

Thomas Mawhinney  
Windsor Farm Elementary School  
Grade: 5  
Subject: Math/Language Arts/Social Studies  
Teaching Experience: 12

“Parents and teachers need to work together to increase learning potential… It is important to share those times that a parent’s child does something outstanding so that they just don’t think that their teacher contacts them only when something is wrong.”

honorees continued
Anne Arundel County Public Schools Teacher Nominees

Michael Miller
Old Mill High School

Grades: 9-12
Subject: Music
Teaching Experience: 22

“The foundation of my steel drum band/classroom environment is that all are welcome and anyone can do it… Placing students on instruments that match their personality and specific talent is like putting an athlete in the best field position to help the team win.”

Brenda Osborne
MacArthur Middle School

Grade: 6
Subject: Language Arts
Teaching Experience: 24

“Was that the bell already? ‘This class goes by fast…’ are words that can be heard just about every day in my classroom and are a reflection of… my teaching philosophy – providing quality instruction that is stimulating and rigorous.”

Sheri Rinehuls
Severna Park Elementary School

Grades: K-5
Subject: Art
Teaching Experience: 8

“Art is a universal language that teaches a sense of pride and allows for freedom of expression… I have discovered that most students are talented in their own way, and it is my job to figure out where their personal talents lie.”

Kellie Schell-Ramey
Waugh Chapel Elementary School

Grade: 5
Subject: Elementary
Teaching Experience: 12

“Even on my best day, my work is not finished. There is always more to do; more challenges to overcome; more goals to achieve; more work to be done to ensure the success of every learner… Therein lays the reward of the profession. No matter what goal a student meets, I want more for him/her.”

Mark Schrader
Southern High School

Grades: 9-12
Subject: Special Education/Math
Teaching Experience: 17

“As I grow into a confident and effective teacher, I have learned that teaching is more about the students than the content or teacher… Knowing the students in my classroom is the foundation of my teaching philosophy.”
J. William Sturgis
Crofton Middle School

Grades: 6-8
Subject: Music/Band/Orchestra
Teaching Experience: 22

“While it has been gratifying to have had many hard-working and talented students who make music sound so wonderful, it has perhaps been more gratifying to see how music has helped students achieve other life goals.”

Kimberly Terry
Manor View Elementary School

Grades: 1-5
Subject: Reading
Teaching Experience: 13

“Every child has something to offer a classroom and it is the teacher’s responsibility to build a relationship with the student… Students should feel like their presence and input is as necessary to a successful lesson as the teacher’s plans.”

Paula Wagner
Mary Moss Academy

Grade: 10
Subject: English
Teaching Experience: 38

“Thirty-eight years after I began my teaching career, I still have the same caring and passion for my students and their learning. Thank you, students, for all that you have taught me.”

Julie Weber
Severna Park Middle School

Grade: 7
Subject: Mathematics
Teaching Experience: 17

“When a student breaks into a big grin, his eyes twinkling and says, ‘Mrs. Weber, I get it!’ I know I, again, have evidence of my belief that all students can learn math. I am an outstanding teacher at achieving this by putting the students’ learning first…”

Carrie Weimer
Pasadena Elementary School

Grades: K-5
Subject: Physical Education
Teaching Experience: 8

“…it is necessary to collaborate with classroom teachers to develop lessons that support and enrich topics in the core curriculum… Students experience a wide variety of activities to appreciate the importance of skillful movement as it relates to everyday living.”

honorees continued
Kimberly Wilcox
Richard Henry Lee Elementary School

Grade: 5
Subject: Mathematics/Reading
Teaching Experience: 10

“I wish I had more time to do even more every day… More importantly, at the end of each day, I hope my students feel that they were challenged, they were appreciated, and they were a valuable part of our classroom community.”

Barbara Wood
Linthicum Elementary School

Grade: 1
Subject: Elementary
Teaching Experience: 15

“My students are also an integral part of our learning environment. Each day they are charged with the task of learning, a task that I insist that they pour all their efforts into… I’ve learned that if students are given a variety of ways to demonstrate their learning, most are able to meet their individual goals.”
Businesses under 50 employees:

BB&T Bank - Pasadena Branch
Mary Brodowski
Nominated by: Jacqueline Dunn, Northeast High School

Mary has donated significant time to several Anne Arundel County schools, and has worked on a variety of initiatives including mock interviews and career days. She also serves as treasurer for the Northeast Cluster Business Advisory Board, and is constantly recruiting new volunteers not only for the Board, but for other initiatives that benefit schools.

Richards Tree Care
Christy Folderauer
Nominated by: Eileen Lemmon, Broadneck High School

Richards Tree Care sets an example of civic service to the Broadneck community. The company consistently contributes a multitude of resources to Broadneck High School, Magothy River Middle School, and Cape St. Claire Elementary. It provides the manpower, materials, and expertise on many outdoor projects at all three campuses. Richards also contributes financially to the Broadneck PTSO, Athletic Boosters, Music Boosters, the Theatre Group, and the Honor Roll Breakfast.

The Cotton Exchange - Lutherville
Gary Lipski
Nominated by: Darryl Gonzalez, North County High School

The Cotton Exchange has always presented, created, and provided items to help support motivation and school spirit. In addition, company officials visit North County High School’s marketing classes to share real-life marketing ideas and their business expertise with the students. Their products are used as motivational aids for the student body.
**Businesses over 50 employees:**

**Adam’s Ribs, Severna Park**

*Joseph Lefavor*

_Nominated by: Ginny Langford & Kate Snyder, Old Mill High School_

For the past several years, Joseph Lefavor has had a huge impact on the extracurricular programs at Old Mill High School. He has donated his time and money to the boys soccer team, dance company, indoor and outdoor track and field teams, baseball team, and the steel drum band. He has also generously catered many events at the school. He is always more than willing to help out in whatever area is needed.

**Anne Arundel County Planning and Zoning**

*Carole Sanner*

_Nominated by: Sherri Billheimer & Sharon Stratton, Arundel High School_

Carole Sanner brings energy and enthusiasm to everything she touches at Arundel High School. She has been instrumental in the school’s Community Development and Global Citizenship Signature Program, helping to create a signature explorations course by working with teachers and imbedding her real world knowledge into the curriculum. She has also participated in teacher workshops, mock interviews, and a student leadership conference.

**Big Vanilla – Pasadena**

*Holly Jupitz*

_Nominated by: Michele Devine, Chesapeake High School_

Big Vanilla supports many organizations on an annual basis. The company supports and partners with Chesapeake High School on many of these endeavors, including the 9/11 Community Service Project, Toys for Tots, Holiday Sharing, and A Child’s Christmas. In addition, Big Vanilla provides use of the Community Center to the school system, and provides a venue for the high school swim team.

**Navy Information Operation Command**

*Executive Officer CDR Rachel J. Velasco-Lind*

_Nominated by: Linda Toth, Lake Shore Elementary School_

The Navy Information Operation Command has become an integral part of Lake Shore Elementary School, with its members volunteering over 130 hours a month. This organization sends sailors in two days a week to assist teachers with their students’ academic needs. The volunteer efforts in the classroom have had a measurable impact on student performance, and volunteers fulfill many needs including chaperoning field trips, tutoring, mentoring, and most importantly serving as role models for the students and the community.
Judges for the 2012 Teacher of the Year
Laura Groo, 2011 Anne Arundel County Public School Teacher of the Year, and 2011 Maryland State Teacher of the Year Finalist
Kirk Greubel, Principal, Mayo Elementary School
Christian Hodges, Arundel High School Student
Lucinda Hudson, Former Principal, Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Jamie Mataosky, Severna Park High School Student
Timothy Mennuti, President, Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County

Judges for the 2012 Business Partnership Awards
Lise Foran, Anne Arundel County Public Schools
David Reilly, Reilly Benefits
Chuck Yocum, Anne Arundel County Public Schools

A special Thank You to our generous gift bag donors:
Annapolis Symphony Orchestra
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The Association of Educational Leaders
The Greene Turtle
The Rose Group – Applebee’s
The Steakhouse
The Excellence in Education Committee would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the following people for their time, talents, energy, and support of this event and tonight’s program:

Chamber of Commerce staff
Education Committee members
2012 Judging Panel
Don Cramer and the AACPS Design and Print team
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The AACPS Public Information Office team

We are very grateful for their dedication to the educators of Anne Arundel County.
Former AACPS Teachers of the Year

1986-87 (also Maryland Finalist)
Richard Wiles, Physical Education Teacher
Millersville ES

1987-88
Penny Vahtsen, Science Teacher
Magothy River MS

1988-89 (also Maryland Teacher of the Year - 1990)
Patricia Neidhardt, Science Teacher
Broadneck HS

1989-90
Art Smelkinson, Drama Teacher
Old Mill HS

1990-91 (also Maryland Finalist)
Olin Yoder, Art Teacher
Meade HS

1991-92 (also Maryland Finalist)
Virginia Crespo, Social Studies Teacher
Broadneck HS

1992-93 (also Maryland Finalist)
Jane Daugherty, Music Teacher
Broadneck HS

1993-94 (also Maryland Teacher of the Year - 1995)
Linda Adamson, Elementary Teacher
Mayo ES and Jessup ES

1994-95
Thomas Cordts, Physical Education Teacher
Windsor Farm ES

1995-96
Kandace Chase, Special Education Teacher
Ruth Eason School

1996-97 (also Maryland Finalist)
Priscilla Ward, Pre-K Teacher
Germantown ES

1997-98
Bruce Villwock, Physical Education Teacher
Broadneck HS

1998-99 (also Maryland Finalist)
Diane Gerrior, Instrumental Music Teacher
Severn River MS

1999-00
Denise Levitine, Art Teacher
Piney Orchard ES

2000-01
Anthony Berard, Social Studies Teacher
Glen Burnie HS

2001-02
Mattie Procaccini, English Teacher
Old Mill HS

2002-03
André Jones, Social Studies Teacher
Severna Park MS

2003-04
Michael Bell, Art Teacher
Southern HS

2004-05
Walter “Skip” Lee
Physical Education Teacher
Chesapeake HS

2005-06 (also Maryland Finalist)
Susan Casler, Language Arts Teacher
Crofton MS

2006-07 (also Maryland Finalist)
Alicia Appel, English Teacher
Southern HS

2007-08
Clayton Culp, Mathematics Teacher
Broadneck HS

2008-09
Donna McCallister, Language Arts Teacher
George Fox MS

2009-10
Erin Sullivan, ESOL Teacher
Glen Burnie HS

2010-11 (also Maryland Finalist)
Laura Groo, Language Arts Teacher
Southern MS