

DPO Honorees, 2017

ALEXANDER

Angelina Jordan

Angelina Jordan is Fundraiser Coordinator for the PTO of Alexander Elementary. Besides launching several new fundraisers, Jordan has volunteered for numerous events, co-coordinated Alexander's Fall Festival, and integrated the University of Iowa's foreign language department into the school district's translation services. She founded and now co-chairs a subcommittee that has raised more than \$1600 to help build Little Free Libraries on the southeast side of Iowa City through a semester-long service-learning project involving Alexander Elementary sixth graders and students at West High. Jordan has launched knitting clubs in Alexander's after-school program, providing older children with an opportunity to mentor younger children. A graduate of Williams College, Jordan has previously coordinated a youth mentoring program and worked as a Family Support Advocate. Currently, she serves on the Board of Directors for both the Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County and Taproot Nature Experience, coaches for the Kickers Soccer League, and works as a facilitator for the University of Iowa's Challenge Course and as a knitting instructor at Home Ec. Workshop.

Angela Hayes

Angie Hayes began her work for the Iowa City Schools in 1976 and her positive influence has extended to kids at Twain, Hills, Wood, Hoover, Shimek, Mann, and Alexander Elementary Schools. She began as a classroom teacher for several years, then taught half time while she attended the Master's program at the University of Iowa. After receiving her master's degree in Science Education with a dance emphasis, she began teaching in the Extended Learning Program, where she helped bright kids to have extra opportunities to learn advanced concepts and techniques in a fun, hands-on way. In addition to teaching, she wrote several arts council and art share grants and collaborated with teachers to get local dancers, musicians and visual artist residencies at Twain, Shimek, and Hills. Later, she sponsored ambassador students at Shimek, served as a rep for ICEA, and worked to help with teacher contract negotiations. As a seasoned ELP teacher, she has written ELP curriculum and professional development modules. Angie's students think she is "a great teacher to the power of 10" because of her "whit and awesomeness" and because "when you need help with something she will help you even if it means she has to do some homework." Parents love her because of her contagious love of learning and her ability to see the remarkable potential in all her students.

ATHENS HISTORY CIRCLE

Denise Rehmke

Denise received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Iowa and has spent her career in the library program in the Iowa City Schools. As librarian at South East Junior High for 9 years, she taught students how to "go online"-years before the Web. While head librarian at West High School for 17 years, she migrated the catalog from drawers of cards to a web-based system accessible from anywhere. Presently, as the district library coordinator for the past 9 years, she is working with tech staff and librarians to deploy Chromebooks to every high school student in the district next August. Yet, with all this technology, engaging with books is still paramount in her professional and personal life.

Nora Steinbrech

In 1963, Nora Steinbrech graduated from the State University of Iowa (now University of Iowa), and began teaching Physical Education at Regina High School and St. Patrick's Elementary. Her second year spent teaching 42 second grade students at St. Patrick's confirmed she not only had a desire but an ability to be a good teacher. From 1968-1975 she taught 5th grade at Solon's Lakeview Elementary. After finishing her Master of Arts degree program in Elementary Administration in 1975, she served as Elementary Principal at Lone Tree, Iowa. Four years later she completed her Educational Specialist degree and subsequently became the Elementary Principal at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary in the Iowa City Community School District. She earned her PhD in Educational Administration in 1992. Nora retired from the ICCSD in 2000. After retirement, Nora became an adjunct member at Coe College and continues to supervise teacher education students in the Reading and Math Practicum Programs at the University of Iowa.

BORLAUG

Lisa Paige

Lisa Paige received her BA in early childhood and elementary education from the University of Northern Iowa in 1977. She earned a Master's degree in special education in 1980 from the University of Iowa. Her career has included time as co-director of Kinderfarm, teacher in Mason City, employee at Grant Wood Area AEA and an instructor at Kirkwood Community College. She came to the ICCSD in 2007 and arrived at Borlaug in 2012. We're so glad she did. Mrs. Paige is a marvelous preschool teacher, opening children's eyes to education through group reading, plays, outdoor tricycle riding and sand exploration. She's a calm presence in the classroom and seems to connect with each child in a unique way. One child, now a third grader, still remembers she and Mrs. Paige share a birthday. Mrs. Paige incorporates children of all development levels into her curriculum and makes learning fun.

CAPSTO

Shannon Sullivan-Channon

Shannon Sullivan-Channon has dedicated her 38-year teaching career to supporting students with significant needs. Always an innovator, Shannon developed the first Moderate Disabilities Program at West High, the SEJH Moderate Disabilities Program, and the original LRE Classroom, the first of its kind, to support students with autism spectrum disorder and mental health concerns. Shannon was part of the grass roots transition movement 30 years ago to provide community-based instruction to students 18 and older. As the founding teacher of the Transition Services Center, she has been responsible for the development of this state of the art program. Shannon's gift is not only teaching community based skills, but also coaching the social skills that are critical for living and work success. She is passionately committed to her students. Because of this, her young adults develop the independence and self-advocacy skills to thrive.

CITY HIGH

Catherine Boyce

Catherine Boyce is retiring from City High, where she taught special education. Her career and education goals have always surrounded children and she has been a lifelong learner, enrolling herself whenever new knowledge was needed. She holds multiple bachelor's degrees from the University of Iowa. She completed graduate work at Central Washington State College, later returning to Iowa for a graduate degree in social work from the University of Iowa. Several years later, she completed two more master's programs in special education at Iowa State. She has loved her 26 years of work with special education students. Upon retirement, she looks forward to spending time with her one and only grandchild, Lil Lucy, who she says will keep her entertained and playful. She also hopes to find more time for reading, exercising and for another passion of her, jewelry making. She will be greatly missed at City High.

John Carhoff

Mr. Carhoff, a native Iowan and graduate of the University of Iowa, has been teaching for the past 47 years in various schools around the world. His current position is teacher of mathematics at City High School in Iowa City, in the subject level: Algebra and Geometry. Some of his memorable times teaching around the world have been in the counties of Scotland at the List D' School in Kilmacolm, The Kingdom of Bahrain (near Saudi Arabia) in the Royal Family School, in the secondary math and K-12 computer class in Yokohama, Japan, and Tutoring in Russia, Malaysia, and Thailand. In the USA, he has taught at the Junior College in Southeast Iowa as the Assistant Professor in mathematics, as an elementary teacher in New London, Iowa; as a Middle School math teacher in Phoenix, Arizona; as an Elementary teacher in San Bernardino, California; and at the Iowa State Prison as the GED Instructor and District Test coordinator. He has traveled to 85 different countries around the world and has experienced first-hand multi-cultural affairs that has greatly improved his instructions to students over the years. He currently resides in Cedar Rapids, Iowa with his wife, Sheryl and enjoys many hobbies including videography where he started, produces and directs the Iowa City's TV show,

“Education Exchange”. He would like to see this TV show continue after his retirement and is hoping to find a new producer and director to keep the program alive. We wish him many new and adventurous travels in his future.

Karrie Craig

Karrie is the mother of two City High graduates and the mom of a current senior. She is honored by the City High PSTO for her many contributions throughout the years. In fact, her volunteer work has benefited the whole district and the entire community. She has served as co-president and as an officer of the Districtwide Parent Organization. She has been a City High PSTO officer for five years, a Hoover PTA officer for three years, and co-chaired the annual SEJH fundraiser for six years. Karrie has been a board member of Little Hawks Club for ten years. She has served on school district committees for wellness, behavioral programs, boundaries, superintendent and principal searches. Karrie has volunteered with choir, show choir, band, football, track, soccer and basketball. Her efforts have led to life-long friendships and community connections that have provided loads of support and laughter. We will miss her at City High, but we know she will continue to make important contributions to this community.

Kevin Koepnick

Kevin graduated from LDF High School in Le Grand, Iowa, before attending The University of Iowa, where he earned Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Science Education. He began his teaching career at West Liberty High School in 1983. He joined the City High faculty in 1984, and has taught nearly all courses in the curriculum in two schools, nine classrooms, and through two major renovations, multiple construction projects, five principals, three acting principals, four superintendents, and two of his own kids graduating from CHS. He was department chair, student assistance team leader, building vertical team leader, and led a District-wide curriculum strategic planning team. Along the way he managed to win such professional awards as Iowa Academy of Science Excellence in Science Teaching Award, National Association of Biology Teachers Outstanding Biology Teaching Award, American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Teacher Fellowship, and Radio Shack Tandy Technology Scholar Award. He was named Iowa Runner-up in the Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching competition. Kevin plans to begin retirement with a Gap Year, which will include mountains, trails, sunsets, music, great food, books, and whatever home-improvement projects Tina dreams up.

Tina Koepnick

Tina attended Ankeny High School then The University of Iowa, where she earned Bachelor and Masters Degrees in Science Education. She began teaching at Cedar Rapids Prairie High School where she also coached basketball, track and golf. Tina came to City High in 1987 to teach biology and coach basketball. She has also taught physical science, earth science, co-taught science and success center. For the past two years she has been an Instructional Design Strategist in the Teacher Leadership Program in addition to teaching biology. Tina has served as department chair, curriculum review member and mentor to numerous practicum and student teachers. During her teaching career she has been awarded the Iowa Academy of Science

Excellence in Science Teaching Award and the National Biology Teachers Outstanding Biology Teacher in Iowa award. She feels extremely fortunate to have had innovative and enthusiastic colleagues and mentors to work with during her career at City High. Tina plans in retirement to take a trip to a “must see fall destination” and then enjoy family, friends and life as a retiree.

Luis Sierra

Luis is retiring from City High as a para professional who has worked with special education students. He has worked throughout the school district for decades, at Mann Elementary, Tate High, and City High. Part of his work has been to help special needs students obtain practical experience at businesses throughout the community. His greatest reward has been witnessing the accomplishments of students he has worked with, and seeing the pride their families show. Luis is a native of East Moline, Illinois. He attended college in California where he studied theatre; he also studied at the University of Iowa. Acting and directing remain among his passions. He has been involved in more than 30 productions, including Combined Efforts performances, which bring together artists with and without special challenges. In retirement, Luis may think about returning to college. He also expects to keep following his theater passion, volunteer in the community, and spend time with his two daughters, Coady and Alexandra, who are both City High graduates.

CORALVILLE CENTRAL

James Jordan

James Jordan joined the staff at Coralville Central this year teaching 3rd grade. He taught early childhood special education for eight years at Mark Twain elementary before joining Central’s teaching staff. While teaching, Mr. Jordan is working on his 2nd Master’s degree through correspondence at the University of Nebraska. We have an amazing teaching staff at Coralville Central and Mr. Jordan has been an outstanding addition. Although he must be busy being a teacher and student, Mr. Jordan has distinguished himself as a teacher and friend to our students. Mr. Jordan frequently stays late and comes early to play chess or Pokémon or Yu-gi-oh (really everything and anything the students are interested in). He has created a safe space in his classroom and become a resource that many of our students value and utilize. The Coralville Central PTO would like to honor Mr. Jordan and thank him for his incredible work with our children.

GARNER

Heidi Eckhardt

There’s a helpful smile in the Garner Elementary Office! Heidi claims Springville, New York as her hometown, but has lived in many parts of the U.S. Those who know her well and work with her are thrilled that she landed in North Liberty, Iowa. When her

oldest child started Kindergarten at Garner in 2011, Heidi jumped right in volunteering at the school. Two years later, she found herself working as a Paraeducator in the building. The following year she began working in the Main Office and now holds the position of Principal's Secretary. Heidi is being honored because of her helpful nature, her organizational prowess, and the positive energy and outlook that she brings to Garner. Her favorite quote related to education comes from Dr. Seuss: "Oh the places you'll go, today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, so... get on your way!" This definitely sums up Heidi's "can do" attitude in her career as well as her life.

Shawn Eyestone

Shawn "The Money Man" Eyestone has been the Treasurer for the Garner Elementary PTO since the school opened in 2010. Before that, Shawn was Co-Chair for the Fun Fair at Van Allen where his two boys attended prior to Garner's opening. Shawn is a staple at Garner Elementary. His participation and volunteer hours over the past 7 years have provided such a value to the school, staff, and to all the Garner students and their families. Within his tenure at Garner, Shawn has worked very closely with the Garner Resource staff to provide additional help from the PTO for our students and families in need. Shawn has also worked very closely with Garner Administration and Staff to create a PTO budget that has been able to give additional funding for Chrome Books as well as additional guest presentations and speakers at the school each year. Shawn is the treasurer of the Liberty High school PSTO, serves on the district curriculum committee, and has served in every executive board position on the Districtwide Parents Organization at least once! If you want serious attention paid to a school-related matter, you call Shawn. His dedication to the ICCSD is, truly, honorable.

Rhea Noel

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Believe you can, and you're halfway there." Rhea Noel passes this notion on to Garner students every day by encouraging them to do and be their best. Rhea started volunteering at Garner when it opened in 2010. She became an employee at the school in 2015 as a Paraeducator, and is now the Building Secretary. Rhea has many qualities and skills that make her a wonderful asset to the school. She never waffles, except when serving on the Garner Waffle Breakfast Committee. She always runs at full-speed, especially when coaching Girls on the Run. She has a B.S. in Economics, which definitely prepared her to help fundraise for Garner's playground equipment when it opened. She manages her daily tasks with professionalism, thanks in part to her previous career in Human Resources. Rhea's talents and skills are put to good use at Garner Elementary, and the school is a better place for it!

Erin Schroeder

Erin Schroeder is being honored today for all that she does for Garner Elementary, from being a much loved second grade teacher and serving on the Instructional Leadership Team, to volunteering her time as the PTO Treasurer. Erin has taught in the ICCSD for 9 years, and has worked at Garner since it opened in 2010. She will be graduating with her Masters Degree in Education this May from Morningside College. Mrs. Schroeder can ALWAYS be found with a smile on her face and a positive attitude! Her favorite

quote comes from Maya Angelou: “They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”

HILLS

Jill Cryer

Jill is passionate about teaching, feeling strongly that there is no other job in the world that is as challenging, ever-changing, demanding, yet so completely fulfilling. The way she cares for students and her ability to engage all students in learning are just a few of the wonderful things about her. She has a true love for teaching and cares about each and every one of her students. She has taught at Hills for 19 years. We truly appreciate her commitment to education!

Kris Mowatt

Kris works with Hills families, school staff and students to improve students’ academic achievements and behaviors. She helps families stay connected with the school and community. In addition to these things, she also uses resources to help provide clothing, school supplies and food for our families. Kris is a very valuable member of our learning community and we appreciate all that she does for our Hills families. Kris’ dedication to the Hills community has been on-going for the past 16 years.

Travis Truhler

Travis helps all students develop life skills. He sees students individually and in classrooms to provide guidance lessons. He provides resources for students, families and staff to help students manage concerns they may have regarding studying skills, peer pressure, self-esteem and coping with changes. Travis has been a great addition to our school. He joined Hills two years ago and has made a positive impact!

HOOVER

Cynthia Dohrer

Cindy Dohrer is an Iowa City native who lives on the same side of town where she was born. She and her husband live with their two parrots, Baby and Chico, and their daughters each live about a block away from them. Cindy started with the school district in 2000. She has been a night custodian substitute and head night custodian at West High. She has also worked at two of her alma maters — Mark Twain and City High. She has loved being at Hoover for the last five or six years. Cindy intends to find a job once she retires at the end of the school year, but nothing as strenuous on her aging bones!

Shelly Maxwell

Shelly Maxwell is a Wisconsin native who graduated from Viterbo College with a degree in secondary English education and theater. She moved to Iowa City with her husband, Mark—an Iowa City native—in 2000 and began working in the Hoover Elementary

cafeteria in 2008. She eventually moved into the role of secretary in 2011 and provides vital support to Hoover Principal Dennis Harnack, as well as to Hoover students and families. Shelly is the mother of two children, Julianne and Charlie, who both attend City High School. Shelly's favorite part of her job is interacting with students, because "they make every day an amazing adventure." She also is impressed by the dedication of Hoover parents and teachers.

Paul Michalski

For 39 years Paul Michalski has taught band in Warren and Kewanee, Illinois, and Muscatine, Iowa, before coming to Iowa City in 2000. He received his Bachelor's Degree from Western Illinois University and Master's degree from the University of Illinois. He has taught over 2500 students to play in the band. He lives with his wife, Debra, a special education teacher of 40 years, and daughter, Morgan Jasia, a senior at City High. In retirement he plans to work on their 1913 Bungalow, work in his shop, ride his Harley, go to auction at Sharpless every Wednesday and keep music in his life.

Chris Norenberg

Chris Norenberg has three decades of experience at Hoover Elementary. She first joined the staff as an educational associate in 1987, and in that role, she worked with six teachers, while also helping out in the office and providing recess supervision. As a mother of four daughters who all attended Hoover, Chris appreciated the opportunity to work outside the home while still remaining connected to her children. In 1992, she accepted the position of media secretary at Hoover and collaborated closely with Dolores Madden, Hoover's longtime librarian, for 23 years—until Dolores's retirement. Chris continues to enjoy her role as Hoover's media secretary and is always there to help students with questions.

HORN

Megan Recker

Megan Recker is the Student and Family Advocate for Horn Elementary. She is being honored for the countless hours she spends helping students and families at Horn. Megan spends many hours transporting families to various appointments and making sure students have everything they need for school and home. Each week she distributes food for students to take home over the weekend. Megan's makes every family feel welcome and supported at Horn. She is truly an asset to Horn Elementary staff and families.

KIRKWOOD

Kathy Jepson

Kathy Jepson began teaching the year of our country's bicentennial. Her first year, she taught fifth graders in a parochial school in Cedar Rapids and earned \$7000. She couldn't believe she was so lucky to be paid to do something she loved this much. Most of her experience has been in the middle elementary grades, but during the last 30 years that she has worked in gifted education she taught all grades K-12. She taught in Cedar Rapids, Cedar Falls, Waterloo, North Cedar, Lone Tree and for the past 23 years, in the Iowa City School District. She remembers driving to Kirkwood Elementary on the first day of this school year and thinking she still loved teaching as much as when she started. Working with students has been the best part of her 40 year career.

LEMME

Anne Dennis

Anne Dennis received her special education degree from the University of Iowa and taught in the Iowa City School District for one year at Hoover Elementary. She moved to Oregon and taught special education for 10 years and went to the University of Oregon to receive her master's degree. Anne's daughter was born in 1992 and we moved back to Iowa to be near family. She has taught special education at Hills, Twain, Lucas and Lemme. Her daughter is getting married in June and her son is graduating from the University of Iowa in May so 2017 is a big year for Anne and her family. Anne and her husband are planning many trips and are excited to be able to do them!

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Cindy Slutts

Cindy Slutts was hired by Mike Kelley when he needed a "mom" for an associate position. She stayed in the ICCSD for 22.5 years at Lemme as a "mom" – 9.5 years as an associate and 13 years as Principal's Secretary. In that time Cindy survived training four principals; helped at least 10 different associates for the office; facilitated 40-50 staff members each year; enjoyed 350-400 students each year; and acted as mom, secretary, delivery person, messenger, advocate, counselor, nurse for 700-800 parents a year. That's a lot of faces, friends, stories and experiences! No wonder she is tired! Cindy looks forward to developing community gardens as well as her own, get back to crafting, volunteering, traveling and maybe even having a bait shop along the Cedar River.

LINCOLN

Brent Criswell

Brent Criswell grew up in Indianola, Iowa. He is married to Brydie Criswell and they have three children; Henry, Violet, and Monroe. Brent is a devoted father and husband. He joined the Lincoln staff five years ago and he had an immediate impact on the staff and students. His caring approach and invested interest in his students makes for a positive and successful classroom environment. Brent is a great team member as well. He is supportive of his teaching partners and takes the lead in new areas of learning. He is currently the staff member who is in charge of Safety Patrol. Each year Brent helps to organize Lincoln's Fiesta Night, in which proceeds are directed to helping pay for School of the Wild. Brent is dedicated to making Lincoln a positive place for students and families.

Pam Hubbard

When asked to share what they liked most about Mrs. Hubbard, her students said, "When I get hurt, she hugs me." "She cares about everyone." "She helps us learn." Walk into Pam Hubbard's classroom and you can immediately tell that she loves teaching. She has turned teaching into an art form. Listen in on any given day and you will hear her happily singing directions to her class, laughing with students about a funny story and calmly helping a student with any kindergarten "emergency" that may arise. Pam began her teaching career in Lawrence, Kansas. She taught kindergarten there for 4 years before moving to Ankeny, Iowa, to teach kindergarten for 5 more years. In 2003, Mrs. Hubbard graduated from the University of Iowa with a Masters in developmental reading. After graduation, Pam Hubbard, began teaching in the Iowa City School District where she has taught kindergarten at Weber and Lincoln. At Weber, Pam was instrumental in making home visits an important part of establishing a true partnership with parents. When not at school, Pam is an avid long distance runner who enjoys spending her free time outdoors with her family.

Ann Langenfeld

Ann Langenfeld is in her sixth year as principal at Lincoln Elementary and the Preschool at Wendell Johnson. Ann grew up on a farm in Storm Lake, Iowa and attended University of Iowa and University of Northern Iowa where she received her undergrad, Master's Degree and Administration degree. After living in Georgia and Florida, she and her family returned to Iowa City where she began working in the ICCSD. While in our district, she has served as a Title I and Reading Recovery teacher at Grant Wood Elementary, district staff development coordinator, and facilitator of the district's mentoring program. Ann puts in an extra effort in everything she does, from engaging students in conversations about their lives outside of school to doing a "Happy Dance" with a student who achieved a goal. Ann is happily married to Tom for 30 plus years with two beautiful daughters, Hannah and Katie and son-in-law Ian. Outside of school, Ann enjoys going on long walks with their dog, Leo, fishing, and camping. Ann helps make to make Lincoln a wonderful experience for students, staff and families.

Betsy McElroy

Betsy McElroy is a woman of many talents, always willing to share her time and gifts with her community. In the short 5 years Betsy has lived in Iowa City, she has helped in just about every major event or activity at Lincoln Elementary. Her generosity of volunteerism has been fueled not only by a desire to benefit her kids and the other Lincoln students, but to support the school community that she felt so supported her and her family. Beyond Lincoln, Betsy contributes to the community by organizing district-wide transportation for College for Kids, establishing the Tate High School Takeaway Pantry, teaching preschool music at Nolte Academy, caring for cats at the Iowa City Animal Shelter and singing her heart out at Trinity Episcopal Church. Betsy's favorite pastime is spending time with her family husband Steve and sons Evan 14 and Kyle 11. Betsy loves singing, hiking, running, quilting, scrapbooking and playing new musical instruments. Betsy is always willing to go the extra mile for her family, friends, school, Church and community. We just love her.

LONGFELLOW

Dawn Anderson

In ten years as a parent at Longfellow elementary Dawn Anderson has served as PTA president, past-president, treasurer, school supplies coordinator, ice cream social chair, and carnival chair. She has volunteered at book fairs, carnivals, landscaping projects, and field trips. She was a weekly volunteer in kindergarten, first grade and second grade classrooms. When Dawn isn't volunteering at school, she enjoys teaching at the University of Iowa College of Law. She has been energetic, organized and diligent in supporting Longfellow School. She will finish of the year working on the 6th grade graduation committee. We thank Dawn for her years of service and wish her well as her youngest child moves on to junior high next year.

Stephanie Arling

Stephanie Arling is a parent at Longfellow Elementary. When she isn't working as a nurse at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the UIHC, she enjoys volunteering with bigger kids at school. Stephanie has served as the PTA's volunteer coordinator for 6 years. She is so good at rounding up volunteers that she even convinced her husband to spearhead a playground equipment installation project! Over the years, she has either chaired or volunteered at almost every school event including field trips, back to school night, playground and landscaping work days, carnival, bike rodeo, and art show. We thank Stephanie for her years of service and wish her well as her youngest child moves on to junior high next year.

Traci Ojile

For the past ten years Traci Ojile has been a very active parent at Longfellow Elementary School. She has served the PTA by holding the offices of president and past-president. In this role, she has volunteered at nearly every PTA event and has chaired the food booth at the family fall dinner and carnival. She has quietly assumed responsibility for numerous tasks that impact our school and is often the go-to parent at events, always willing to direct volunteers and assist in anyway. We thank Traci for all

her years of service and wish her well as her youngest child moves on to junior high next year.

Marge Polman

Mrs. Marge Polman has been a pillar in the Iowa City Community School District for a number of years, serving multiple buildings – including Roosevelt, Borlaug, and Longfellow Elementary Schools. For the last three years, Mrs. Polman has done a fantastic job of supporting students and learning at Longfellow. Whether it's in the classrooms, hallways, or cafeteria, she creates a clean and welcoming environment for all Longfellow community members. No matter the task or obstacle, Mrs. Polman is always willing to help find a positive solution. In her retirement, she looks forward to spending more time with her husband, children, and grandchildren. On behalf of the entire Longfellow community, thank you, Mrs. Polman. It has been a pleasure and we wish you all the best.

Pam Yahashiri

Pam Yahashiri is a parent at Longfellow Elementary School. Well before any of us had heard of the term “Blue Zones” Pam was known for bringing delicious and healthy food to our school functions. She has co-chaired the carnival for several years, coordinating food donations from many local sources, making the food booth something even the adults enjoy. Pam's generous spirit and warm smile have been a great welcome to all who work with her. We thank Pam for her years of service and wish her well as her youngest child moves on to junior high next year.

LUCAS

Renee Speh

Lucas Elementary and the Lucas PTO are proud to honor Renee Speh, an active parent and passionate volunteer. Over the past 8 years, Renee has been committed to making Lucas a great school for all its students. She has been an active member of PTO, serving several key positions including PTO president. She was involved in the development of the Outdoor Committee, creating a plan to provide outdoor educational spaces to all Lucas students, revitalizing the school prairie, installing a garden, and seeking funding to make these plans a reality. Renee's involvement at Lucas has had a lasting impact on our school and while we are sad she will no longer be a Lucas parent, we are grateful for all the time and dedication she has given.

MANN

Linda Nelson

After 12 years of teaching art to teens followed by 26 years as an elementary School Counselor, Linda has decided to retire at the end of this year. Linda was one of the

“original” elementary school counselors when the elementary counseling program began. Linda looks forward to getting back to her art as well as camping and hiking all over the country (and at times of the year that aren’t just summer). Linda has made a positive difference in the lives of so many children. Mann soccer games will never be the same!

NORTH CENTRAL JUNIOR HIGH

Pat Witinok

Pat Witinok has 30+ years of teaching experience and even in her last year has not slowed down one bit. She sets an unrivaled example of putting students first. In the classroom, Dr. Witinok challenges her students (as well as her colleagues) with the highest of expectations. She constantly pushes her students to do nothing less than their best. Dr. Witinok is a constant and driving force in the recycling program at North Central and has organized field experiences that introduce students to a life of environmental awareness. She has long been a First Lego League coach for students interested in engineering and computer programming. She makes sure to attend every sporting event at North Central and she supports the fine arts by appearing at students' music events. The Iowa City Community School District has been fortunate to have such a dedicated and passionate educator.

Linda Young

Linda Young’s dedication to the special education students here at North Central Junior High are second to none. She has played an integral role in creating a fun and enthusiastic learning environment in the general education classroom, as well as, the special education classroom. Linda works extremely hard to make our students feel safe, respected and valued, while challenging them to do their best in and out of the school environment. The Iowa City Community School District has been fortunate to have such a dedicated and passionate educator.

NORTHWEST JUNIOR HIGH

Syra Hurtarte

Syra has worked for ICCSD for 22 years and was a quintessential element of NWJH for most of that time. Syra was the first administrative secretary I ever had. As a new principal in a brand new district and state, Syra mentored me through a challenging time. Syra has since moved on to her dream position, still helping others, as a translator for the U. I honor Syra for her dedication to helping Northwest staff, students and families, as well as nurturing me through my first year as principal. I miss her dearly but it warms my heart that her legacy of hospitality lives on.

PENN

Candace Sobotta

Candace began her career teaching 5th grade in Milwaukee. That first year inspired her to pursue a Masters in Special Education. She taught 18 years in Wisconsin and is now wrapping up 18 years of service in Iowa City Schools. She has worked at Wood, Lucas, Twain, Garner, Mann, Van Allen, Lincoln, Hoover and Penn. Candace is looking forward to more time for hobbies like reading gardening and doll making and especially opportunities to see her 2 grandchildren who live in Italy. Thank you for supporting kids and teachers (especially us at Penn) over the last 36 years, Candace!

Wonda Sovereign

Wonda began working in the lunchroom when her grandson was a Penn student. That was 16 or 17 years ago! Wonda says she will miss the noisy-ness of the kids. Yes, she really said that is one of her favorite things about the job. She is looking forward to more time with her 4 kids, 9 grandchildren and celebrating their 50th anniversary with her husband, Larry, this July. She is also hoping to do some volunteer work in local nursing homes. Thank you and best wishes, Wonda.

SHIMEK

Matt Larson

Matt Larson continues to lead Shimek's legendary after school program. Matt and his staff offer the kids a variety of fun activities, balancing art, music (including a first class rock band experience), cultural enrichment, cooking, games, physical activity, and good old fashioned play time. The Shimek community is grateful to Matt and his staff for the outstanding care and enrichment offered to our kids.

Lori Skoff

We are thankful to Shimek Elementary parent Lori Skoff for her service to the students, teachers, and staff of Shimek Elementary. Lori has helped with PTO fundraisers over the years, including the fall supper, spring carnival, and silent auction. Without her leadership, this year's silent auction would have been cancelled and our fundraising goals would have fallen short. Lori has also been involved in Cub Scouts, has been very supportive of Shimek's after school program, and treats our teachers with wonderful homemade goodies. We will miss Lori's spirit and kindness as her son moves on to junior high next year.

SOUTH EAST JUNIOR HIGH

Terri Finger

Terri Finger is an excellent leader for the SEJH Drama Department; directing both musicals and plays for SEJH students to be involved in annually. She performs works that have breadth and depth, and the students revel in these opportunities. Furthermore, Terri's commitment is without a doubt a great asset to the community and the school; having live theatrical performances for students to see during the day and the community to appreciate in the evenings. Her willingness to commit to the extra duties is an immeasurable benefit for SEJH. In addition to SEJH Drama Director she directs the show choir (again bringing in outside assistance for choreography) and the choirs at SEJH. Terri's dedication and diligence are commendable.

Marilyn Hansen

Marilyn Hansen received 3 degrees, psychology, Social Work, and Education with 3 endorsements – American History, psychology, and sociology. She worked at West High School from August 1983 to June of 1994, CEC (now Tate HS) from Oct 1995 to June 1998, and she has been at SEJH since August of 1998.

Bill Pringle

Bill Pringle has built two incredible Jazz Bands for 7th and 8th grade of over 40 students in each! He provides opportunity and enrichment that goes above and beyond. His dedication and diligence has given the bands at SEJH numerous awards, such as most recently the opportunity to perform in the IBA. He inspires students to push themselves to be the best they can be, all while having a great time under his direction. Not only are his Jazz Bands popular and large, but the bands under his leadership continue to be well over 100 students each. (SEIBA Numbers, other honors and awards?) Bill's commitment and passion to the band programs at SEJH are commendable.

TATE

Anne Coatar

As an English and Academic Support Teacher Annie is organized, efficient, friendly and caring. We are happy to have her here on our Tate Team. What stands out is Annie's flexibility and unwavering support of our school goals. She is an active member of our PBIS team, our Academic Support team where she helps to create individualized plans for struggling students. Annie is willing to step in and sub in classes without hesitation. Annie is also the Student Council Advisor where she encourages students to become involved, and assists in planning school events. Annie is active and we often see her playing volleyball at lunch or laughing and interacting with students during her free time. Her positive attitude is infectious and her smile brightens everyone's day.

Tristan Sievers

Tristan coordinates our Student Advisory Center (SAC) a classroom that allows students to repair conflicts, take ownership for classroom behavior, and have a safe place to stay if anxious or having a tough day. The SAC is very busy, however, Tristan does a wonderful job listening to students, and getting to know them and helping them facilitate conflict resolution with students and teachers. It helps that Tristan organized

and is able to implement and oversee many behavior plans while collecting data for our Positive Behavior Intervention Team to make data-driven decisions. Tristan goes the extra mile to make relationships with students by coaching the volleyball team and stays after to work in our evening program. Tristan is integral to the success of our PBIS program because she reinforces CORR values with new students and helps to reinforce our expectations for all students. Tristan is always willing to lend a helping hand and is positive in all interactions. We are happy to have her here on our Tate team.

Jan Smith

Jan Smith is an invaluable mentor generously sharing her time, wisdom and resources with our staff and students at Tate High School. As a model teacher, she has developed a collaborative culture of continuous learning: spearheading our Blended Learning Training and integrating technology school wide. Jan designed and implemented two popular Makerspace areas: a creative hands on area and a production lab that involves a green screen, podcasting, and recording studio. Jan is passionate, caring, and always willing to lend a hand to help support our students, which is how our library has become a gathering place for students to feel welcome to explore and find a comfortable place to go. As Jan moves on to become the Media Specialist at Liberty High School we wanted to acknowledge all that she has accomplished at Tate High School and wish her the best at Liberty High School. We will miss her calming advice and cheerful mood.

TWAIN

Angela Hayes

Angie Hayes began her work for the Iowa City Schools in 1976 and her positive influence has extended to kids at Twain, Hills, Wood, Hoover, Shimek, Mann, and Alexander Elementary Schools. She began as a classroom teacher for several years, then taught half time while she attended the Master's program at the University of Iowa. After receiving her master's degree in Science Education with a dance emphasis, she began teaching in the Extended Learning Program, where she helped bright kids to have extra opportunities to learn advanced concepts and techniques in a fun, hands-on way. In addition to teaching, she wrote several arts council and art share grants and collaborated with teachers to get local dancers, musicians and visual artist residencies at Twain, Shimek, and Hills. Later, she sponsored ambassador students at Shimek, served as a rep for ICEA, and worked to help with teacher contract negotiations. As a seasoned ELP teacher, she has written ELP curriculum and professional development modules. Angie's students think she is "a great teacher to the power of 10" because of her "wit and awesomeness" and because "when you need help with something she will help you even if it means she has to do some homework." Parents love her because of her contagious love of learning and her ability to see the remarkable potential in all her students.

Linda Mutchler

Linda Mutchler was one of the first students to attend Twain when it first opened in 1954 serving K-3rd grade students. Linda entered in the 3rd grade, but fortunately Twain added 4th grade the next year, and 5th and 6th grade in the following years. While she and her sisters were in school, one of her sisters wrote a letter to Hal Holbrook, asking if he could bring his one-man Mark Twain show to the school. Mr. Holbrook declined, but sent back a nice letter and a photo, which now belong to Linda's niece, who is also a Twain alum. When Linda retired from the University of Iowa she began volunteering at Twain. For the first two years at the school she sat with kids and let them read to her and helped them understand what they were reading. Lately she has been helping out with the After School program, helping kids with math and reading homework and playing cards and games with them.

Mary McCue

Mary McCue has volunteered at Twain since she retired from her work as an Early Childhood Social Worker at the Grant Wood AEA in 1999. She intended to help with preschool or kindergarten, but was asked to assist with the 5th-6th grade classes instead. Her 5th grade granddaughter, Tamika said that this was OK, "as long as you don't look at me more than the other kids." Mary says she didn't, and she stayed with those classes for a number of years, helping to organize science materials and social studies, helping individual students with reading, and assisting with field trips. Mary then worked with a kindergarten class, and now mostly helps in the library, where she still gets to read with students sometimes. About Twain, Mary says "I love being at Twain- the wonderful staff and more and more, students from so many places and cultures. Tamika is now a nurse at Mercy Hospital and has three girls. The oldest two are at Twain, in third grade and preschool. Their parents are so happy with Twain that they transferred them back in when they moved out of the Twain boundaries."

VAN ALLEN

Lisa Hildebrand

Lisa Hildebrand teaches physical education at Van Allen Elementary. She has been responsible for the organization and implementation of our Workout Wednesday program that is designed to promote a healthy lifestyle for students, staff, and families. She has used social media as a way to give families and community members an idea of what happens on a daily basis in PE, as a way to provide her students with a voice, and as a tool for her own personal, professional growth and learning. Furthermore, she is always quick to willingly try any new initiative if it has the potential to positively impact her students. Mrs. Hildebrand was one of our First Penguin Award recipients, this year, due to her willingness to take risks in the classroom and alter her instruction to best meet the learning needs of her students. Van Allen is lucky to have her as a staff member.

Michelle Knupp

Michelle Knupp teaches kindergarten at Van Allen Elementary. She has been flexible with the ALWAYS changing dynamics and expectations of the classroom teacher. Michelle constantly reads, researches, and asks for help from others to build in her understanding. She strives to make her classroom the best for each child. This school year in particular, Michelle has a variety of needs in her classroom, on top of the typical needs that accompany every room. Michelle has had to be brave and ask for help to make sure every need is met for her students. Mrs. Knupp was one of our First Penguin Award recipients, this year, due to her willingness to take risks in the classroom and alter her instruction to best meet the learning needs of her students. Van Allen is lucky to have her as a staff member.

Bridget LaRoche

Bridget LaRoche teaches fourth grade at Van Allen Elementary. Among other things, her class has participated in Breakout Edu and Mystery Skype experiences, Genius Hour on a regular basis, the Global Read Aloud, the Global Student Read-a-Thon, Global School Play Day, and World Read Aloud Day. Not only does she regularly communicate with the parents of her students, but she also encourages parents to ask their child guiding questions about what the students are learning. Furthermore, she routinely incorporates and amplifies student voice into her classroom for the benefit of her students. Mrs. LaRoche was one of our First Penguin Award recipients, this year, due to her willingness to take risks in the classroom and alter her instruction to best meet the learning needs of her students. Van Allen is lucky to have her as a staff member.

WEBER

Dean Conrad

Dean Conrad has been an educator for 17 years. During these years, he has served as our Physical Education Teacher. Mr. Conrad is highly professional, enthusiastic, and student centered. He understands the needs of our students and works hard to build meaningful relationship. Developing deep connections and advocating for students are elements of his professional practice. Mr. Conrad is organized and always looking for fresh ideas for his classrooms. He coordinates many activities for Weber's Game Day. Upon entering his class, one would see students very active due to multiple engaging activities. He also utilizes technology to meet the diverse needs of students along with 21st Century Skills. One of the most highly anticipated traditions in our school is during the Fall Festivities. He teaches the 5th and 6th grade students "The Thriller Dance" to be performed for the whole school prior to school celebrations. This is enjoyed by all.

Tracy Elmer

The Weber Elementary 3rd Grade Team is a dynamic group! This team consists of Lisa Murray, Cristi Johnson and Tracy Elmer. They have a combined teaching experience of over 56 years. They have been working together as grade level for the last 12 years. The team collaborates exceptionally well. What makes them a dynamic team is their

community engagement activities, close family and home connections, project based activities, writing inclusion in all content areas, Homework-Club, and engaging field trips tied to curriculum and instruction. At the end of the year, students walk away with a unique portfolio collection of artifacts of learning. Artifacts range from service projects, writing samples, pictures of students and presenters and many more. Each member of the group is caring, compassionate, and student centered. For these reasons, they are being nominated for the DPO Educational Scholarship.

Cristi Johnson

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WEST HIGH

Roxanne Hughes

Roxanne is completing her seventeenth year at West High and says her time at West has been her most meaningful teaching position. She likes the challenge and stimulation that West offers every day when she walks through the doors. One award granted to Roxanne while at West was an Excellence in teaching award through the Belin and Blank Center at the University of Iowa. Another experience she treasures is working with students to participate in the World Food Prize at Iowa State University. Two girls wrote essays, a decade apart, telling how they would address food shortages

in the world. One of the girls completed an internship in Beijing addressing the need for food security. This accomplishment of hers gave Roxanne great joy. We will miss Roxanne's genuine concern and caring for her students and her colleagues. When Roxanne retires, she plans to sleep better, walk more, linger over her coffee and paper, read to her heart's content, laugh often with friends and family and continue volunteering.

Amy Kanellis

Amy Kanellis is retiring after 41 years in education. The last 27 years have been as a counselor with the Iowa City Community School District- 13 years at City High and 14 years at West High. Prior to working in Iowa City, Amy was a counselor in Solon and a music teacher at Regina. Amy was hired at City High to start an at-risk program with the intention of helping students who were not connected to school learn the strategies they needed to be successful. Originally she was part of small team of people in the district- today one of her greatest joys is seeing the countless services that are now available to at-risk youth and the increased awareness that all district employees have of the challenges their students face. Amy has been the recipient of two Shine awards and received a "Distinguished Teacher" award from the University of Iowa. Amy will miss the fresh start she has felt every August and the joy she feels every May when she watches the students with whom she has worked graduate and start their new chapters. She has treasured the stories of her students and of the countless teachers she has had the privilege of working with. We will miss Amy and the way she made everyone feel that upon entering her office, at that moment they were the most important person in the world. In retirement Amy plans to continue living each day as a gift.

Sue Kuehl

Sue Kuehl has been a special education teacher at West High School for the last 16 years, working with hundreds of students over that time helping them overcome difficulties with academics and social skills so they could successfully graduate from high school. Sue has degrees from University of Iowa and Morningside College; in addition to her special education training, Sue is also a technical writer. Her husband and two daughters moved to Coralville when their daughters were small and have enjoyed their time here. Prior to starting at West, Sue also worked at Coralville Central and Weber Elementary. We will miss Sue's great sense of humor, and her tireless work with students who truly benefitted from her expertise and support. It should be noted that Sue submitted her bio information in the form of multiple haikus; this shows her wit and her writing expertise! In retirement, Sue and her husband are moving to snow-free Texas for sun, fun and travel.

WICKHAM

Sommer Gilbert

Sommer Gilbert has been employed at Wickham Elementary School for two years as a secretary in the main office. Sommer is the first person that staff, students, and parents interact with when entering the building and they are always greeted with a big smile

and a friendly hello. Sommer's bubbly personality is infectious! She takes everything in stride and works hard to keep the office and building running smoothly. This year Sommer spent several weeks doing double work due to a resignation. The building did not feel the office being down a staff member due to Sommer's hard work and positive attitude. Sommer is a valued staff member and is appreciated by all!

Michael Schlitz

Michael started his teaching career in Tennessee before moving into the Iowa City Community School District in 2009. Michael has enjoyed teaching students at Horace Mann, Lincoln, and now Wickham Elementary. One of his favorite parts of teaching in an elementary school is watching the extraordinary transformation as his students grow from kindergarteners into sixth graders. Michael relies heavily on the wonderful support he receives from his wife and kids, his co-workers at Wickham, and the school librarians in the Iowa City Community School District. He is very grateful to have the opportunity to work with outstanding professionals and for the opportunity of teaching (and learning from) so many incredible students.

WOOD

Alexis Stigge

Alexis Stigge has spent much of her entire educational career in the Iowa City Community School District after moving here from her childhood state of Nebraska. She worked at Roosevelt Elementary, Mann Elementary, and Wood Elementary and taught 2nd through 6th grade during her many years as an educator. She has always been interested in continuing to enhance and expand her students' learning and her peers' teaching. She was instrumental in the establishment of the Mann Outdoor Education Project that led to the district-wide outdoor education experience for upper elementary students. She served for multiple years as the Science Advocate for her buildings and was involved with the Science PALs (Parents and Literature) program from its beginning. Alexis's commitment to her students is evident in multiple ways including the "Tree of Knowledge" mural that is now and will remain for some years on the entry wall of Grant Wood. Whatever retirement holds for Alexis, there is no doubt that she will enjoy visiting with her students from her many classes throughout the years and following their evolution and progress.