

## 2024 Teacher of the Year Winners

Beatriz Quiroz - Edwin J. Kiest Elementary School  
Monica Robinson - Robert T. Hill Middle School  
Wenyun Wang - Emmett J. Conrad High School  
Kathy Shannon - Zion Lutheran School  
Laura Johnson - Lakehill Preparatory School  
Robert Cantu - Dallas Academy



Wenyun Wang, Emmett J. Conrad High School; Kathy Shannon, Zion Lutheran School; Laura Johnson, Lakehill Preparatory School; Monica Robinson, Robert T. Hill Middle School; Robert Cantu, Dallas Academy. Photo by Carol Hensley.

### Finalists

Rachel Adams, Sylvia Mendez CREW Leadership Academy; Anthony Bailey, Woodrow Wilson High School; Mariah Bowens, Reinhardt Elementary School; Robert Cantu, Dallas Academy; Nick Enriquez, Bryan Adams High School Leadership Academy; Claudia Abarca Flores, Alex Sanger Preparatory School; Cristian Gallardo, Sam Tasby Middle School; Rogelio Garcia, Alex Sanger Preparatory; Savannah Gardner, Bryan Adams High School; Sophie Hall, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School; Shannon Howrey, Bishop Lynch High School; Kristin Hughes, JL Long Middle School; Laura Johnson, Lakehill Preparatory School; Erica Lambert, Sylvia Mendez CREW Leadership Academy; Mabel Leal, Lakewood Elementary; Nicole Mulupi, Martha Turner Reilly; Daisy Ochoa, Eduardo Mata Montessori School; Estrella Pace, Eduardo Mata Montessori School; Gloria Prieto-Puentes, Lakewood Elementary; Beatriz Quiroz, Edwin J. Kiest Elementary; Guillermo Rios, Bishop Lynch High School; Monica Robinson, Robert T. Hill Middle School; Rachel Ruiz Guereca, Sylvia Mendez CREW Leadership Academy; Abigail Rutherford, Reinhardt Elementary School; Caitlin Schmidt, Woodrow Wilson High School; Kathy Shannon, Zion Lutheran School; Ellen Stamp, Zion Lutheran School; Jonna Stout, Eduardo Mata Montessori Elementary; Jessica Torres, Sylvia Mendez CREW Leadership Academy; Blanca Vazquez, Eduardo Mata Montessori School; Lauren Wallace, Bishop Lynch High School; Wenyun Wang, Emmett J. Conrad High School; Marisha Watson, Lake Highlands High School; Kathryn Williams, Lake Highlands Junior High.

## **Beatriz Quiroz - Edwin J. Kiest Elementary School**

Beatriz Quiroz demonstrates instructional expertise, creativity, and innovation through her committed, thoughtful, passionate approach to teaching. She incorporates a variety of techniques to engage students with different learning styles and needs. She differentiates instruction through the use of visual aids, hands-on activities, group discussions, and technology to create a dynamic and interactive learning environment. For example, she has been recognized at the district level for her exemplary study, internalization, and execution of the new curriculum Amplify and Eureka. Mrs. Quiroz goes beyond traditional teaching methods by designing creative and engaging lesson plans. She was quick to adopt engagement strategies in her classroom because of students' needs to be part of the teaching and learning. She integrates storytelling, role-playing activities, and multimedia presentations to make the learning experience more dynamic and memorable for her students. For example, the Dallas ISD's Early Learning Department's have recognized her instruction as a model of a math classroom.

Mrs. Quiroz frequently interacts with family members because she views families as partners in students' learning. She is proactive in efforts to engage, discuss and address families often and early. She actively seeks out input and feedback from families to understand their perspectives and concerns about their children's learning needs. For instance, families from her previous and current classrooms have consistently praised her communication and engagement skills. Mrs. Quiroz plays a key role in fostering positive relationships between the school and the community. Mrs. Quiroz organizes and facilitates family engagement activities at the school. She is a believer in the importance of extracurricular activities. She has been our previous coordinator of extracurricular activities where she collaborated with families to obtain student participation at 100%. She has consistently engaged families through multiple communication methods through phone, text, ClassDojo, meetings. The result has been a stronger connection between the school and the families to support educational initiatives and programs at the school.

## **Monica Robinson - Robert T. Hill Middle School**

Monica Robinson possesses a remarkable combination of leadership, academic excellence, mentorship, innovative teaching approaches, and a profound commitment to meeting the diverse needs of our students and their families. As a school building leader, Mrs. Robinson has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership skills. She leads by example, fostering an environment of collaboration, respect, and continuous improvement among colleagues. She takes initiative in curriculum development, instructional strategies, and student support initiatives, contributing significantly to the overall success of our school. Mrs. Robinson stands out for her outstanding academic achievements. She maintains high standards of academic rigor while also ensuring that every student feels supported and challenged to reach their full potential. Her dedication to academic excellence has resulted in measurable improvements in student performance and engagement across various subjects and grade levels. Moreover, Mrs. Robinson excels as a mentor teacher, guiding and inspiring fellow educators to adopt best practices and innovative teaching methodologies. She generously shares her expertise, providing invaluable support and encouragement to new teachers as they navigate their professional journey.

One of Mrs. Robinson's most commendable qualities is her innovative approach to teaching. She consistently seeks out new ways to engage students, making learning both meaningful and enjoyable. Whether through hands-on activities with real-life connections or creative use of technology, she ensures that lessons resonate with diverse learning styles and interests, fostering a deep and lasting love for learning among students. Furthermore, Mrs. Robinson's is deeply committed to cultural responsiveness and equity in education. She recognizes and celebrates the rich diversity of our student body, actively addressing the unique needs and backgrounds of each learner. Her inclusive teaching practices create a supportive and empowering environment where all students feel valued, respected, and understood. In addition to her dedication to students, Mrs. Robinson is also a passionate advocate for parents and families. She actively collaborates with families from diverse backgrounds, building strong partnerships based on trust, communication, and mutual respect. Her efforts ensure that families are connected, informed, and actively engaged in their children's education.

## **Ms. Wenyun Wang - Emmett J. Conrad High School**

Ms. Wang teaches Algebra I and Geometry in the Conrad H-TECH Program. As a distinguished lead geometry teacher, she has harnessed a diverse array of instructional strategies to cater to the unique needs of each student, creating an inclusive and dynamic learning environment. Through strategic grouping and differentiated instruction, she has maximized learning outcomes while seamlessly integrating ESL teaching strategies, such as 'I Say, You Say' and implementing visual aids, to bridge language barriers effectively.

Her commitment to excellence has consistently yielded the highest ACP scores not only on her campus but across the entire district, solidifying her role as an instructional leader and a driving force behind pedagogical advancement. Her expertise has extended beyond the classroom, influencing instructional practices at the district level and national level. Upon the invitation of Ms. Elizabeth Hart, the esteemed district Early College Program coordinator, created the summer bridge math curriculum and provided comprehensive training to all district summer bridge faculty during the 2021-2022 academic year. The summer bridge program, designed to support incoming freshmen and facilitate their successful transition into a college environment, required a meticulous approach. She reflected on the college math curriculum and 8th grade math TEKS to craft vertically aligned lessons that reinforced essential academic skills. The curriculum received high praise from the district leadership.

Her math classes were always recognized as model classes on her campus and were observed formally and informally by professionals from other schools. The classes were frequently visited by potential teachers who aspired to work in the education field. She was one of two teachers selected by the assistant principal to be observed by the district collegiate committee. She was asked to demonstrate a hands-on strategy: Group Work. Additionally, she was one of the few classes selected to be visited by H-E-B judge panel while the district was competing for the Education Excellent Reward with other school districts of the state.

She consistently aligns her lessons with real-world applications, emphasizing both workplace skills and college readiness. Due to her outstanding teaching performance, she was recognized and nominated for Teacher of the Year Award during both 21-22 and 22 - 23 school years. Additionally, she received the Outstanding Service Award for Conrad Early College Program. The Student Athletes Department awarded her Teacher of the Week due to the extensive and constructive support to the student athletes.

## **Kathy Shannon - Zion Lutheran School**

Kathy Shannon has been an early childhood educator for 20+ years. She has a degree in Child Development and Psychology, plus a certification for administering the Gesell (Yale University) Developmental Observation & Assessment to children ages 2-6. She also received her Director's Certification this past school year. Teaching is not a job for her. It is a calling. She loves experimenting with different learning techniques that are all through play based learning. Her classroom is constantly changing and evolving through STEM activities, letter recognition and sounds through songs and books. Everything she does is geared to each child's individual needs socially, emotionally and cognitively.

She strives to create a giving heart to the children in her classroom by organizing and collecting items for refugees in the neighborhood and working with Vogel Alcove assembling bags for homeless children (the children participate in this as well) and helping with the school food drive for White Rock Center of Hope. She is a life-long learner. Every year she participates in various professional development seminars and trainings and has led trainings for the 15 teachers and assistants in the PreSchool. She currently has received 32 training hours just this school year to date.

She has a passion for teaching young children about Jesus and His great love for them. She wants each child to develop a love for learning that will continue for years to come through exploration and discovery while building

strong social and emotional skills. Every student that leaves her class remembers that Jesus loves them and that so does Mrs. Shannon.

She makes every effort, on a daily basis, to address the uniqueness of every child God has created. She celebrates not only each individual's differences (their uniqueness), but all who live in the neighborhoods and across the world.

### **Laura Johnson - Lakehill Preparatory School - Middle School**

Laura has been a teacher for over 25 years and over the course of her career, she has learned to implement a variety of approaches to her instruction in order to reach all of her students and their different capabilities. It requires research, innovation, creativity, inspiration, drive and organization. She has taught all grade levels Pre-K through 6 which has allowed her to engage with varied learning styles and needs. She is constantly reminding her students that they may learn a concept in a completely different way than their neighbor and it is such a benefit to understand their own learning style so they can be the best students they can be. She explains everyone's brain works in a distinct way and what works for one, may not work for someone else. What is "easy" for one might be challenging to someone else. She tries to incorporate visual, auditory and even kinesthetic learning in her math classroom so every student can be successful.

As an active PTA member, she held many positions over her 10 year tenure including being a co-chair for the National Junior Beta Club for four of those years. Students were provided opportunities to give back and serve the community by devoting their time toward initiatives such as volunteering at school functions or food pantries, sending letters to veterans, making blankets, or collecting items for the SPCA. In addition, she acted as an elementary Council delegate during which she acted as the liaison for a number of years. She attended monthly board meetings and relayed information back to the school, community, and executive board. Currently, she is active with the school's Professional Learning Community for the math department at Lakehill. They meet eight times a year during which they collaborate in order to enhance curriculum, the learning community and teaching practices.

For the past two years she has taken on several additional responsibilities beyond her math classroom. She is proud to be a member of the school's Learning Support Team as well as a middle school advisor. The LST is made up of teachers, the school psychologist, and the Learning Support Specialist. They meet weekly to discuss any students who are in need of extra support academically and create and implement an individual learning intervention plan. She was also selected to be an advisor for 8th grade this year. She regularly meets with her group of students, not only to check in on their academic progress, but also to provide social emotional lessons and offer the time and space for them to openly discuss their concerns, struggles, goals, etc. All of these experiences have improved her teaching practices and allowed her to gain new skills and knowledge.

### **Robert Cantu - Dallas Academy**

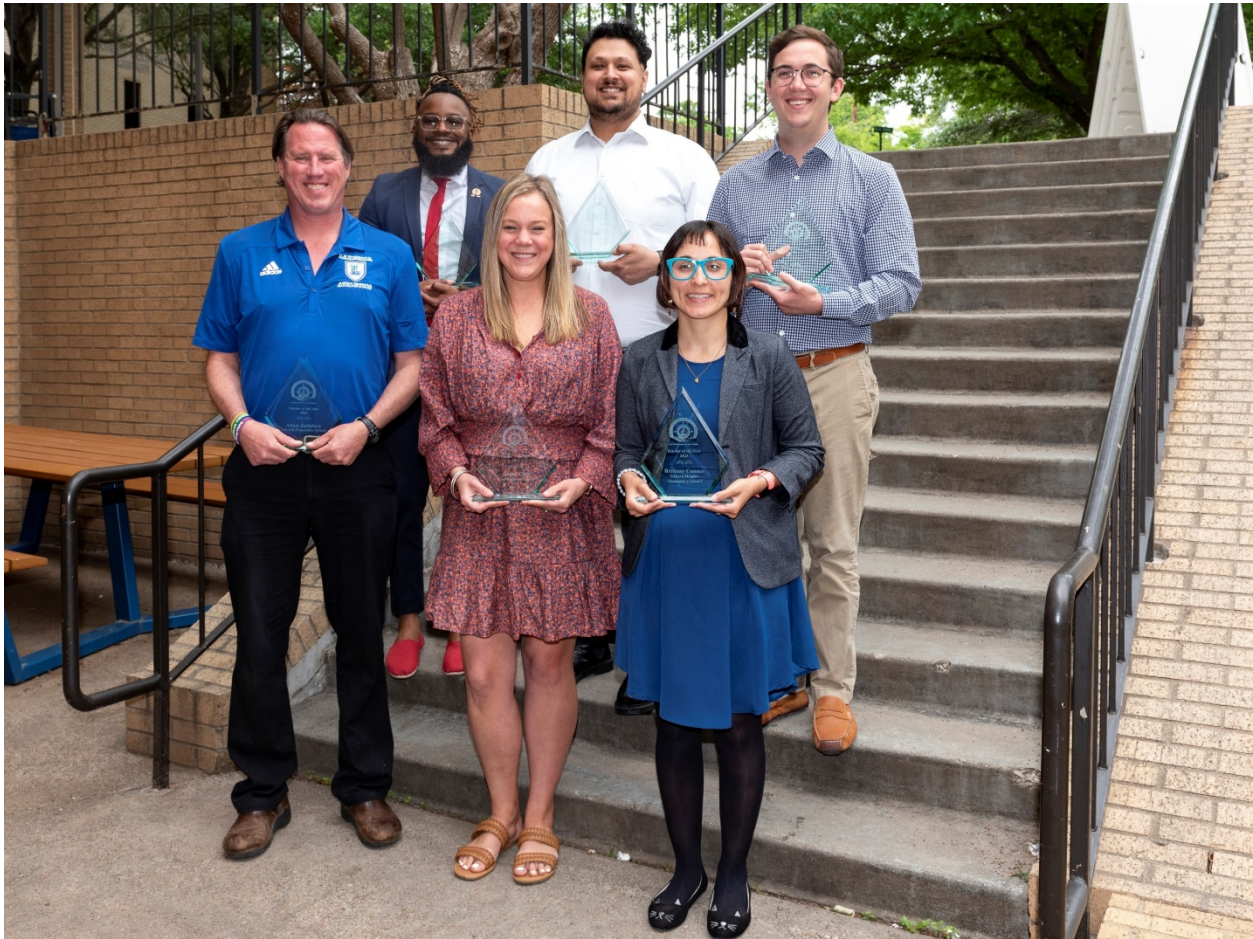
Robert Cantu currently serves as PE Coach working with 1st – 12th grade students. His energy and dedication to making a difference in the lives of the students he serves is unmatched. Coach Cantu has made invaluable contributions to Dallas Academy throughout his four-year tenure with Dallas Academy including playing a pivotal role in community engagement. Cantu partners with the school Community Director bringing the annual DAWg Run & Chili Cook Off to the Dallas Academy school community. This fundraising event raising money for the school's tuition assistance program invites our community to run together in a 1-mile fun run at White Rock Lake and then return to participate in a Chili Cook Off competition back at the school campus. Appreciating the opportunity to add new excitement to an annual school event this year, Cantu added a new level of fun by helping to make the fun run a color run. Participants were splashed with color powder along the race route and based on the amount of smiles coming through the finish line, the color run was an overwhelming success. Cantu also worked with our Head of School helping to fill the need for a school wellness program free of cost to all who participate. He coordinated with a local Zumba instructor to bring a monthly program where all are invited to exercise and dance the first Wednesday night of the month. Students, parents and teachers all came together for an aerobic exercise and fun. A lot of people said they didn't want to come because they were

worried they weren't coordinated enough, but they end up glad they came. It's free of cost, thanks to Dallas Academy, and it's good for the body.

Robert's academic endeavors and achievements are numerous. He received his bachelor's degree in Sociology from University of Texas Permian Basin, then his Master of Science in Sports Management from Southern New Hampshire University and began his career as a PE Coach in an elementary school in the Waco School District. After moving to the Dallas area, he joined Dallas Academy hoping to make a difference in the lives of students with learning differences. In his last four years at Dallas Academy, Robert has earned a stellar reputation for providing comprehensive instruction to students in a supportive and positive environment. Cantu lives his belief that physical education teaches students how to not only be active but to lead healthy lives while also teaching them valuable skills of how to work together and to show good sportsmanship.

## 2023 Teacher of the Year Winners

Brittnay Connor – Geneva Heights  
Shaun Phillips – Alex Sanger Preparatory  
Steven Ramirez – Bryan Adams High School  
Jordan Gusa – Zion Lutheran School  
Will Keffler – St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School  
Adam Jochelson – Lakehill Preparatory School



Front row: Adam Jochelson, Lakehill Preparatory School; Jordan Gusa; Zion Lutheran School; Brittany Connor, Geneva Heights Elementary School. Back row: Shaun Phillips, Alex Sanger Preparatory School; Steven Ramirez, Bryan Adams High School; Will Keffler, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School.

### Finalists

Jose Andrade, Personalized Learning Academy at Highland Meadows; Diane Birdwell, Bryan Adams High School; Eric Chapman, G. W. Truett Elementary School; Christina Chin, Geneva Heights; Elementary School; Kaitlin Connell, Lakewood Elementary; Brittnay Connor, Geneva Heights Elementary School; Courtney Davis, Lakewood Elementary; Martin Delabano, St. John's Episcopal School; Uriel Diaz, Woodrow Wilson High School; Nicole Dickerson, Woodrow Wilson High School; David Diederich, Lakewood Elementary; Angela Donalds, Lakewood Elementary; Caitlin Drott, Woodrow Wilson High School; Juan Fernandez, JL Long; Johnathon Fish, Woodrow Wilson High School; Daniel Forsythe, Bryan Adams High School Leadership Academy; Abby Fox, Lakewood Elementary; Cristian Gallardo, Sam Tasby Middle School; Marisol Garcia, Jack Lowe Sr.; Savannah Gardner, Bryan Adams High School Leadership Academy; Angeles Gonzalez, Mata Montessori; Jordan Gusa, Zion Lutheran School; Yasmeen Harris- Youngblood, Victor H. Hexter Elementary School; Erin Hennegan, Dallas Academy; Hermina Ivan, Woodrow Wilson High School; Lebreon Jackson, Uplift - White Rock Hills; Adam Jochelson, Lakehill Preparatory School; Wendy Justice, Zion Lutheran School; Will Keffler, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School; Allison Kloby, Victor H. Hexter Elementary School; Justin Kushera, Woodrow Wilson High School; Margaret McClain, W.H+C10 Gaston Middle School; Dale Merchant, Robert T. Hill Middle School; Katherine Moser, JL Long; Nicole Mulupi, Martha Turner Reilly Elementary; Ms.

Jennifer Ollendike, Lakewood Elementary; Shaun Phillips, Alex Sanger Preparatory; Ms. Gloria Prieto, Lakewood Elementary; Mayda Ramirez, G. W. Truett Elementary School; Steven Ramirez, Bryan Adams High School Leadership Academy; Mrs. Ramsuer, JL Long; Estefania Reyes, Casa View Elementary School; Guillermo Rios, Bishop Lynch High School; Kate Ryan, Richardson North Junior High; Priscilla Scrimshire, Zion Lutheran School; Kathy Shannon, Zion Lutheran School; Melody Singleton, Eduardo Mata Montessori School; Audrey Smith, Bryan Adams High School Leadership Academy; Haley Spencer, Victor H. Hexter Elementary School; Annie Strieber, White Rock Elementary; Ellyn Stroud, Robert T. Hill Middle School; Jeff Thorman, Zion Lutheran School; Amy Wheeler, Bishop Lynch High School; Arianna Zeb, Lee McShan Jr. Elementary;

### **Brittnay Connor - Geneva Heights Elementary School**

In many classrooms across Texas and the US, education has morphed into a high-pressure task of constant test prep and test taking, resulting in teachers losing their passion for teaching and kids losing their love of learning. But in Ms. Connor's class, she shows that learning can still be fun and exciting all while achieving high expectations. She is challenging yet patient, kind yet firm, and above all she creates an environment where all kids feel valued. For many students, Ms. Connor is a life-changing teacher. She has the innate ability to see the potential in each of her students and also help them see it in themselves. It is remarkable to witness how her kids grow not only academically but personally. She teaches beyond the curriculum to develop young and mighty global citizens. With her, they not only learn about math and social studies, but also what it means to give back to their community.

Geneva Heights Elementary is a Title I school that is nestled in an East Dallas neighborhood with a student body that is highly diverse in both ethnicity and income status. Ms. Connor embraces this diversity and uses it to help her students better understand how they can all contribute to building a stronger, more unified society. Each year, her students take on community service projects that they plan, organize, and execute which teaches them how to take action and be leaders with empathy. She encouraged a more timid and reserved student to initiate and lead an afterschool club they named CUBS (Community Uplift By Students) which is dedicated to student-led service projects throughout the school year.

Her commitment to education extends well beyond the classroom. She is the PTA Teacher Liaison, SBMD DE&I Chair, as well as the Dual Language Lead Teacher at Geneva Heights Elementary, and if there's a school event that requires volunteers, she's always one of the first to raise her hand. In addition, Ms. Connor is a member of Dallas ISD's Advisory Council, serves as an Educator Advisory Board Member for Educator Collective, and is a Senior National Policy Fellow with Teach Plus, which is a highly selective, rigorous program for outstanding teachers who want to help shape education policy and advocacy. On top of this, she attends her students' sporting events, recitals, plays, and volunteers at Interfaith Family Services which provides transitional housing and empowerment programs for families who are experiencing housing and financial hardship. Above all, Ms. Connor is a woman who practices what she teaches and impacts the lives of her students in ways that will remain with them for a lifetime.

### **Shaun Phillips – Alex Sanger Preparatory**

Mr. Phillips believes in positive relationships with colleagues, parents, and students. Mr. Phillips frequently collaborates with other teachers, school staff and also take on positions of leadership within the school. He has lead professional development sessions, he is over the garden committee (but also involved in other committees), has been a lead teacher and was also teacher of the year for the 2021-22 school year. This past year he wrote a proposal to get a new garden at the school. The PTA raised over \$30,000 for this garden project. This money will go to maintaining the garden for a year, repair any damages for a year, and an outside classroom. They will give personal development to six teachers on campus with curriculums on how to incorporate the garden with learning for our students. Parents and community members help with painting, cutting and more to help get this vision for the garden to become a reality.

In the community garden that is being built, he is helping to lead personal development which will be held once a week for a full school year. The personal developments will include how to maintain a garden, how to give fresh fruits/veggies to the community, and how to incorporate all of these things into the classroom. He is leading a mentoring club at the school that focuses on African American students. This club focuses on attendance, grades, equality and mental health. There is a check in once a month with students as a group but check in daily with the students to make sure majority of those qualifications are met.

### **Steve Ramirez – Bryan Adams High School**

Mr. Ramirez is a proud Dallas ISD and Bryan Adams High School Alumnus. He has the honor of being the Director of Orchestras and Mariachi at Bryan Adams High School Leadership Academy. Through The Texas Excellence Initiative, he was awarded the Distinguished Teacher Review as an Exemplary Teacher. Along with a rigorous music curriculum, he provide students with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills through event planning, project management, hosting, and administrative skills. In September 2022 the Bryan Adams Orchestra hosted the Dallas ISD All-City Orchestra Sectionals, Clinic, and Concert, a 3-day event consisting over 300 Dallas ISD students. In January 2023, The Bryan Adams Orchestra hosted the Dallas ISD Orchestra Solo & Ensemble Competition, a 1-day event consisting over 200 Dallas ISD Students. In February 2023, The Bryan Adams Orchestra hosted the Region 20 UIL Orchestra Concert & Sightreading Contest, a 2-day event consisting of over 1000 orchestra students from Dallas, Irving, Richardson, and Highland Park. For each of these events the students were required to develop a project plan including assigning roles and responsibilities. Students had roles of ambassadors, tech-crew, runners, and administrative clerks.

He is the founding director of the Mariachi Program at Bryan Adams High School Leadership Academy. Since 2019, the program has grown by 500%, and in 2023, qualified, and competed at the UIL State Mariachi Competition in Seguin, Texas. This program has garnered parent and community support, including being a featured performance on the 2022 CBS 11 Dallas Mayor’s Tree Lighting Ceremony at Klyde Warren Park and a cover story on Spectrum News Segment, Tell Me a Story. The Bryan Adams Mariachi has performed at numerous community and school events.

He serves as the BAHS Cluster Coordinator for Orchestra; he collaborates with feeder Middle and Elementary Schools on recruiting, pedagogy, performances, and curriculum. Through strong professional connections, The Bryan Adams Orchestra Cluster has been able to maintain excellence throughout the Pandemic, earning high ratings at UIL region and State Orchestra and Mariachi Events. He strives to provide a safe place for students to create in. He provides opportunities for Emerging Language Learners to experience a traditional music class setting. Through visual and kinesthetic lessons, students will learn how to play simple chord progressions and songs on the guitar. Regardless of language barriers between native speakers and ELL’s, each student is learning the guitar and how to read music at the same pace. Through music, he has been able to break language barriers and focus on learning.

### **Jordan Gusa – Zion Lutheran School**

Ms. Gusa’s main goal when she walks into her classroom each morning is that every one of her children know that she loves and cares for them. If that is accomplished, the learning and academics will follow easily and naturally.

She believes it is important to develop the “whole child.” She encourages learning through problem solving, group interaction, sharing, listening, taking risks, and making good choices. She hopes her students remember her as a loving and consistent teacher who loves Jesus and them!

She plans and implements fun and exciting lessons that encourage engagement and interaction with peers. She hopes to set the children up with a love for learning that will follow them throughout their school years.



She is involved in the community inside and outside of school. She coordinated a care flight team and helicopter to come to Zion for Career Day. They were able to land the helicopter on the field and the entire school got to watch and learn. It was an experience that all of the kids will always remember. Recently, she also coordinated, organized, and put together 248 bye-bye bags for Vogel Alcove, an organization in Dallas that helps homeless families. These bye-bye bags will be given to homeless children so that they are not hungry on their way to new shelters. The bags included bottles of water, juices, goldfish, applesauce, beef sticks, and more. Each year she helps with the Vacation Bible Study program at Zion, reaching 200 plus children from the surrounding neighborhoods.

She leads multiple professional development sessions for the teachers at Zion. Most recently she lead a session on the effects of screen time on the young child's brain. This is a topic that is very close to her heart as she is seeing the negative effects each and every day. She hopes to share this information to parents and include other topics such as emotional regulation and the importance of play. Parent education and partnering with parents can play a HUGE part in her success as a teacher in the classroom and the children's success as a whole.

She has children from many walks of life come into her classroom each year. She works to inspire the best start for every child. She strives to embrace each child's learning style and emotional/social "set-up". It is important that her classroom feels like their own little community and that everyone who walks through the door is accepted, encouraged, and loved.

### **Will Keffler – St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School**

Over the last four years of being at STA, I have created and redeveloped my Social Studies curriculums based upon the students received every year.

Besides traditional lecture based lessons, he uses music like Hamilton, picture books, and movie/tv show clips to get students engaged. He likes teaching the American Revolution because it gives him the chance to show Hamilton, which even gets non-musically inclined students involved in the class. Some of the projects and activities have been a video project where students had to create a Netflix documentary series and trailer on the Civil War, map making for the different cultures of Texas and events of the Texas Revolution, group book reviews of picture books on the different black heroes in American history, and learning about the failures of the Articles of Confederation by attempting to vote on the best pizza toppings unanimously (which was impossible). He enjoys having students engaged and working together to make history fun.

In his recent new position as Director of Community Service and Social Outreach, he helps the students learn more about their local and global community. This year he had the privilege of planning out service projects allowing students to be immersed in the community and for them to grow in empathy for others that have different life experiences. He planned a Christmas gift drive for kids living in Central America where the students got to fill the gift boxes themselves with Christmas cards and toys, having the kids pack and decorate hygiene bags for the local homeless population in Dallas, celebrating local Firefighters with a school assembly, making Christmas cards for troops for Veteran's Day, organizing a school supplies drive for a partner school in need in the Philippines, and planning a White Rock Lake cleanup with the 7th graders. There is joy and excitement in our students faces when serving others. He engages in the community by attending student sporting events and musical performances, coaching basketball teams, and planning out field trips.

Along with attention to diversity in the way his students learn, he makes it a priority to teach about U. S. History from the perspective of different demographics and groups of people. His students learn how life in the United States is for the diverse group of Americans that have lived and currently live here and exposes students to so many diverse ideas and cultures.

## **Adam Jochelson – Lakehill Preparatory School**

One of the standout qualities of Mr. Jochelson is his creativity in teaching complex ideas. He has a remarkable ability to tailor his teaching methods to the specific needs of each student, ensuring that they fully understand the material. His approachable nature and willingness to help outside of class make students feel comfortable approaching him for assistance.

Furthermore, Adam's advocacy for marginalized students is truly inspiring. He not only accepts students from all backgrounds, but he also goes out of his way to ensure that every student feels seen and valued in his classroom. His empathy and compassion have made him a trusted ally for many students who may feel isolated or marginalized due to prejudice.

His commitment to his students extends beyond the classroom. He regularly attends school events and trips, and shows up for their sporting events, competitions, and extracurricular activities, demonstrating that he cares about his students' interests and passions. His unwavering support for his students has helped foster a positive and welcoming school community.

Above all, his passion for teaching is evident in everything he does. He consistently puts his students' needs first, and his dedication to their success is truly unparalleled. His enthusiasm for teaching and learning is infectious, and it is clear that he inspires a love of learning in his students.

Mr. Jochelson has been an active part of the local East Dallas Community and has served on the boards of charities including Good Local Markets, the Texas Land Conservancy, and founded a 501(c)3—the Free Tutoring Foundation. He coaches several middle school sports teams and regularly participates in Saturday cleanup events at White Rock Lake. He supports the East Dallas community through his small business Dallas Coffee News that supports local businesses and helps them connect with the community.

# 2022 Teacher of the Year Winners

Tiffany You - Dallas Academy  
Kathryn Potter - St. John's Episcopal School  
Tom Trautman - Bishop Lynch High School  
Cathia Arevalo – S. S. Conner Elementary  
Emily Reynosa - Lee McShan Elementary  
Andrew Lyons - Alex W. Spence Middle School



Front row: Karen Hettrick, Vice Chair I for the Greater East Dallas Chamber; Kathryn Potter, St. John's Episcopal School; Cathia Arevalo, S. S. Conner Elementary; Tom Trautman, Bishop Lynch High School. Back row: Emily Reynosa, Lee McShan Elementary; Andrew Lyons, Alex W. Spence Middle School; Tiffany You, Dallas Academy.

## Nominees

Armando Aguilar - Kiest Elementary; Cathia Arevalo - S.S. Conner; Mackenzie Bailey - Eduardo Mata Montessori; Brittnay Connor - Geneva Heights Elementary; Stephanie Davenport - S.S. Conner; Camillya Davis - S.S. Conner; Miguel Angel Vazquez Dominguez - Mount Auburn STEAM Academy; Rachael Edwards - Ronald McNair Elementary; Yocelin Garza - S. S. Conner Elementary; Angeles Gonzalez - Mata Montessori; Elizabeth Halasz - Lakewood Elementary; Suzanne Madrid - S.S. Conner; Sara Marx - Lakewood Elementary; Jeanine McMahon - George W Truett Elementary; Ramicia Paul - Eddie Bernice Johnson Elementary; Emily Reynosa - Lee McShan Elementary; KeJuana Richardson - Ronald E. McNair; Elma Rios - Mata Montessori School; Reyna Jazmin Ruiz - Gilbert Cuellar Sr. Elementary; Shauna Schultz - Lake Highlands Elementary; Portia Tatum - G.W. Truett Elementary; Miguel Vazquez - Mount Auburn; Maria Yetts - Victor Hexter Elementary; Andrew Lyons - Alex W. Spence; Carla Utley - Robert T Hill; Dillon Lamb - Bryan Adams HS Leadership Academy; Jomera Lane-Watson - Bryan Adams High School; Debbie Ezell - The Children's Center; Audrey Johnson - Lakehill Preparatory School; Tiffany You - Dallas Academy; Rosa Flores-Ysea - St. Thomas Aquinas; Ellen Kufel - Lakehill Preparatory School; Jeff McCormick - St. Bernard of Clairvaux Catholic School; Kathryn Potter - St. John's Episcopal School; Jenni Brock - Dallas Academy; Cristi McCarty - Lakehill Preparatory School; Beth Storm - Bishop Lynch High School; Tom Trautman - Bishop Lynch High School.

## Emily Reynosa Lee McShan Elementary

Has been teaching at Lee McShan Elementary for 10 years. Emily teaches a class called "Newcomers" which is a class for first year refugee children coming from over 20 countries speaking over 30 different languages.

She takes time to learn how to say hello in each Child's native language so they can feel a sense of belonging. Ms. Reynosa is member of the Lighthouse Leadership Team and also the coach of the lower grade Robotics Team.

"What I love most about my class is getting to learn about different cultures and getting to help my students feel comfortable and safe in a new place. Many of them have trauma and have been through more than we can imagine so they need a little extra love and kindness" .

Thank you Emily, for your love and kindness.

**Andrew Lyons**  
**Alex W. Spence Middle School**

Teaches 7th and 8th grade science at Alex W. Spence Middle School. This is his 4th year teaching. He also coaches football, baseball, and esports. Mr. Lyons is involved with Academic Pentathlon, UIL, and is the activities coordinator at Spence.

"Mr. Lyons teaches with enthusiasm to better engage and relate to students. He loves to get to know students and where they come from so he can better assist them. Its important to build this relationship and recognize diversity to better reach every student and recognize every student comes to school with different backgrounds and goals for the day."

**Cathia Arevalo**  
**S. S. Conner Elementary School**

Is a 4th grade Reading teacher at Conner Elementary School and has been a teacher for more than 20 years. She has been recognized by DISD as a Distinguished Teacher and an annual high performer with a passing average of 90% plus on state exams.

Ms. Arevalo was born in Colombia and you might say teaching runs in the family. Her mother was her first, second, and third grade teacher. And Her father was her fourth and fifth grade teacher.

Ms. Arevalo is credited as being a trailblazer during the pandemic. She found an online student engagement software to ensure she and the school maintained instructional excellence during the Covid crisis. As a result of her pandemic efforts, she was selected the 2021 Teacher of the year by her administration and peers.

In her free time, Ms. Arevalo enjoys learning new technology, reading, cooking, traveling and dancing.

**Tom Trautman**  
**Bishop Lynch High School**

Tom Trautman is in his 5th year as a teacher at Bishop Lynch High School and his 7th year as the Head Coach of the Bishop Lynch Wrestling Team. Mr. Trautman teaches 5 classes of freshman World Geography where he tries to communicate his love of both history and travel to his students. Mr. Trautman also teaches a Student Leadership class to Juniors and Seniors. Mr. Trautman has received several awards including a Work of Heart Award, and three Coach of the Year Awards. His wrestling teams have won 4 state championships including 3 of the past 4 years. Mr. Trautman is also the male advisor on campus to the Hope Squad, a group of students working to prevent teen suicide. In his free Mme, Mr. Trautman likes to sleep.

**Kathryn Potter**  
**St. John's Episcopal School**

Ms. Potter has been at St. John's Episcopal School for 15 years, and currently teaches 8th grade Algebra I and Fundamentals of Algebra. She serves as the Middle School Math Chair, an 8th grade advisor, a new-teacher mentor, and a member of the Faculty Advisory Committee and the Admissions Committee.

Ms. Potter has a B.S. in Applied Mathematical Sciences from Texas A&M and a M.A.T. in Teaching in Mathematical Sciences from U.T.D.

"I truly enjoy working with middle school students as they provide joy and laughter daily. I hope to foster an interest in mathematics while helping students to become more confident, independent learners".

**Tiffany You Dallas Academy**

This is Ms. You's fourth year of teaching, three of which have been at Dallas Academy. Ms. You is currently the head of Lower School math and science and teaching 4th and 5th grade. Tiffany has earned a stellar reputation for providing comprehensive instruction to students in a supportive and positive environment. Tiffany is one of the middle schooler's favorite Volleyball coaches and a sponsor of the Creation Club where you can find her testing electronic magnets, building legos and creating projects with up cycled items.

"I love teaching because I get a chance to inspire the next generation and make a difference in the lives of my students. I strive to give them the tools that they need to succeed not only in the classroom, but in their day to day lives as well. I enjoy creating engaging lessons that challenge the student to think on a higher level but have a blast while doing it"

# 2021 re-scheduled for April 2022

## 2020 CANCELLED

Normally about this time of year I would start emailing the school principals and school board trustees about the timeline for the teacher of the year awards.

Of course there are some concerns with having the awards go on this year:

- There has been a significant delay in the start of school
- Some schools are still in Virtual learning vs. In person learning
- When in person learning resumes- what happens if there is another spread of virus and schools revert back to virtual learning?
- Are parents in a place where they will take the time to nominate?
- Are educators and administrators in a place that will allow them to take time for nominations?
- If we have the event virtually will there be participation?

Certainly our teachers are still putting in the work and deserve recognition- but possibly 2020 is the year that we pause on having the awards and allow teachers/students/parents to adjust to a “new normal”.

Tammy and I visited today and have come to the conclusion that an alternate program would be prudent for our annual awards event.

A possible substitute program would be: **“How to Survive This School Year”**- have a couple of experts on time management for kiddos doing virtual learning, how to set up a learning zone in your home, how we can help students that are online / internet challenged, have a tutor expert with tips, etc.

4 Teachers were submitted and then presented via Zoom  
Kelly Simms - St Pius X Catholic School  
Crystal Yao - Jack Lowe Elementary  
Christina Ondrey - Mount Auburn STEAM Academy  
Kylie Schaefer - Bryan Adams High School



Kylie Schaefer, Kelly Simms, Christina Ondrey, Crystal Yao

# 2019 Teacher of the Year Winners

Jennifer Edoghotu – L. L. Hotchkiss Elementary School

Michael Jones – J. L. Long Middle School

Jose Delgado – Bryan Adams High School

Jhoana Cayme-Mosley Lakehill Preparatory School

Anna Smith – Dallas Academy

Tim Hagood – Lakehill Preparatory School



Anna Smith, Dallas Academy; Jhoana Cayme-Mosley, Lakehill Preparatory School; Tim Hagood, Lakehill Preparatory School; Michael Jones, J. L. Long Middle School; Jennifer Edoghotu, L. L. Hotchkiss Elementary School; Jose Delgado, Bryan Adams High School.

## Finalists

Miguel Vazquez Dominguez, Mount Auburn STEAM Academy; Warren Johnson, Eduardo Mata Montessori; Elma Rios, Eduardo Mata Montessori; Jonna Stout, Eduardo Mata Montessori; Aaron Aguilar, WH Gaston; Josh Ault, Robert T. Hill Middle School; Emma Buzas, IGNITE Middle School; Kevin Grimes, Dealey Montessori and International Academy; Caitlin Schmidt, J.L. Long Middle School; Shelly Thibodaux, Robert T. Hill Middle School; Becky Brown, Emmett J. Conrad High School; Brandon Harper, Skyline Career Development Center; Russ Keleman, Woodrow Wilson High School; Blythe Mundlin, Woodrow Wilson High School; Amy Aldrete, St. Patrick Catholic School; Ellen Zimmerman, Dallas Academy; Kathy Carroll, St. John's Episcopal School; Bradley Neyland, Lakehill Preparatory School; Andrew Balettie, Bishop Lynch High School; Randy Becker, Bishop Lynch High School; Jennifer Brock, Dallas Academy; Maggie Morales, Bishop Lynch High School.

**Jennifer Edoghotu**  
**LL Hotchkiss Elementary School – Math**

Caring, inspiring, phenomenal, passionate and exceptional. This LL Hotchkiss Elem. School teacher builds strong relationships with students and their families from the very beginning. She reminds them “Your best is your goal.”

Many of her student families are immigrants from Africa and other far away countries. It is second nature to her as you see her relate to her students and their parents. She bonds with all students around the campus regardless of their grade level. In her own words, “I work with all kids. I work with kids from Africa, kids from Saudi Arabia, kids who have extreme learning disabilities and kids who live in poverty. I strive to create a safe and inclusive learning environment for my kids.” To highlight the cultural diversity, she encourages her students to research and illustrate their native flag. These flags are posted around her classroom to show that we are one and everyone is welcome.

Through hard work and dedication, this Distinguished DallasISD Teacher demonstrates innovative learning by transforming her classroom into a real-world scenario based upon the lesson. For example, when teaching students about perimeter, area and volume, she transformed her classroom into a construction site and encouraged students to use the measuring tape as their tool for determining the length and width of numerous items.

She builds parental involvement through conducting school academic nights. During these sessions, parents can ask questions about classroom assignments with the goal of empowering the parents to assist the children. She ensured that a Burmese translator was on site for student families who recently migrated from Asia. Outside of school hours, she conducts home visits to build the student- teacher-family relationship. In her experience, home visits have improved student behavior, attendance and led to academic success.

She also led multiple Social and Emotional Learning trainings to educate teachers and staff on the process by which students manage their emotions to create and maintain positive relationships. School-wide, teachers voiced a decrease in classroom disruptions and behavioral issues after this dynamic training. Please congratulate Teacher of the Year, Jennifer Edoghotu.



**Michael Jones**  
**JL Long Middle School**

Our next honoree teaches 6th grade Science at JL Long Middle School but he is more than a biology teacher. He is an innovative mentor and friend. He is the teacher that every parent wants their child to have! Realizing that the Science Fair program had been abandoned, this teacher restored and revamped this timeless program and brought it back to the forefront of the Science Department. Over 50 students participated in the Fair this year. Currently recognized by Dallas ISD as a Distinguished Teacher based on the Teachers Excellence Initiative, he created the very unique and innovative, student-driven club called the Zoo Crew. This club empowers students to become conservation leaders by providing unique experiences with animals. These 15 different animals live in varied ecosystems and require specialized care from the 82 student members. Students gain further understanding through the summer foster care of the lab animals. Over 30 families are involved in the coordination, hosting and general care of the animals as they go from family to family returning safely to the school the next fall.

Noticing a lack of school spirit, our honoree created the Spirit Club for students. He and a parent also created the Captain Buc mascot. In addition, the fight song had been lost, so he did vital research and discovered the original score. It is now a part of the school again.

He encourages student leaders by teaching responsibility and electing classroom officers who assist with classroom tasks. During instruction, he will have them stand on top of their chairs to recite passages, defend scientific laws, or express individual ideals regarding the lessons. This instills confidence in his students!

You will see him involved in Buc Camp, the JL Long Run and the Pep Squad. He teaches in the International Baccalaureate program as JL Long is the only IB accredited middle school in Dallas ISD.

At the end of all emails, you will see the mantra that he lives by. It is a quote by Aristotle... "Educating the mind, without educating the heart, is no education at all." Please congratulate Michael Jones of JL Long Middle School!

## **Jose Delgado**

### **Bryan Adams High School – AP Chemistry**

Our next honoree has come full circle in his young life—from growing up in Pleasant Grove as a child of immigrants from Mexico and El Salvador, to attending the School of Science and Engineering Magnet High School, going to college at Texas A&M, then returning home to teach Advanced Placement Chemistry at Bryan Adams HS. For most of his teaching career, he has been on a mission to change the course for students whose families have not encouraged them to go to college. He was awarded the Texas Instruments Innovations in STEM Teaching Award and in the summer has proudly worked as a lead counselor for the Texas HS Aerospace scholars program at the NASA Johnson Space Center. The Junior League awarded him a grant to purchase equipment for “The Solution to our Solutions Problem” where students utilize Spectrometers, which are instruments that split light into an array of separate colors.

A parent said that he is the “complete package” when it comes to looking for a teacher to emulate. His commitment, dedication to learning and teaching, and his involvement in the community is unique, and Bryan Adams is fortunate to have him. Outside of his rigorous school demands, he is involved with Primos, a mentoring program in East Dallas, which pairs students from Pleasant Grove to professionals with roots in Pleasant Grove or similar neighborhoods. They participate in activities that help students learn about finances, plan for college, search for internships and more. He also participates in Destination: Bryan Adams, an independent group of community representatives dedicated to promoting the activities of Bryan Adams and the schools that feed into it.

This Master AP Teacher teaches because he loves learning. A favorite learning opportunity was training in Digital Fluency, an amazing insight into the ways technology is used to augment, modify and redefine teaching methods. All students, willing to try and work hard, are accepted into his AP Chemistry program regardless of prior success or failure in science classes. Be it in class or out, his goal for the school is to make it feel like a place where all students belong. Students should have a place they can feel connected and welcomed. Please congratulate Jose Delgado as our Teacher of the Year!

**Jhoana Cayme-Mosley**  
**Lakehill Preparatory School – Elementary**

Confident, Dedicated, Tenacious, Inspirational. These words have been used to describe the physical education teacher for students in kindergarten through 4th grade at Lakehill Preparatory School. She also teaches middle school fitness classes and serves as a middle school and varsity coach. In addition to teaching a full load and coaching six athletic teams, she sponsors several organizations and serves as Lakehill's Athletic Coordinator. A colleague for more than 11 years says "she has unbelievable self-discipline to juggle multiple duties while setting high expectations for herself. She is currently training for a marathon and her students are learning lessons of perseverance, self-discipline and time management from her example. She is never too busy for those who have come to rely on her special brand of encouragement. Those who work with her or have been taught or coached by her find her confidence, dedication and tenacity inspiring." Every summer she helps lead Lakehill's Community Connections Camp, introducing hundreds of children to volunteer service. This honoree sponsors the Pink Out Volleyball game in order to raise awareness and funds for breast cancer, the Student Council, guiding a school-wide water drive for the homeless in Dallas and leading students in the Sundae Sale to benefit middle school students in Florida in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael. Her spring project was a Fill the Bus with Water drive benefiting the Soup Mobile. She also sponsors the Rubik's Cube Club and the Yo-Yo club.

In lower school physical education, she uses the power of finding joy in play and teaches her young students about a healthy and active lifestyle while having fun. As a firm believer in making cross-curricular connections, she reinforces what her students are learning in the classroom by counting in Spanish during warm-up stretches as well as counting by twos, fives and tens. This outstanding teacher is masterful at addressing the differing skill levels of a diverse group of learners yet somehow, challenging each of them to work hard to achieve their personal best. Please congratulate Teacher of the year, Jhoana Cayme-Mosley!

## **Anna Smith Dallas Academy – Middle School**

From our next honorees own words, “If you don’t think you are awesome, no one else will. Being dyslexic and ADHD, I understand that kids do not all learn in the same manner. Having 2 kids with dyslexia and ADHD and auditory processing drove that point home even further.” This outstanding teacher in middle school at Dallas Academy is a creative force in the classroom, in the school and in the community. She believes in the power to change the face of things and she strives to find solutions, not make excuses. Her classroom is not quiet- as it is a collaborative space. Students are engaged in conversation or notably involved in something important. Students are not always at their desks, but sitting on the floor, in bean bags, actively learning and making connections with each other, to life and to the world. Her classroom is uniquely different, just as the learners in the room.

An example of this creative learning is the Positive Carbon Model Home at Dallas Academy. She is the co-sponsor of this event which guides 100 middle and high school students in installing smart glass, solar panels, wind turbines, magnification tubes that concentrate sunlight inside, geothermal water heating, a barrel and pump rainwater collection system, bio-digester grey water system, a green roof and other systems to ensure the model uses less energy than it generates. In May of 2019, these students won the Best Overall project award at the World’s Largest Earth X at Fair Park Dallas.

She sponsors the yearbook club, photography club, and Techy Talents/Gaming Friday. This dynamic teacher is involved in the Dallas Academy Auction, Pumpkin Chunkin’, National Engineers Future City, Dawg Run, Dawg Patch, homecoming chair, the 50th Anniversary of Dallas Academy Chair and many other events.

She feels that teaching is all about introducing students to a world of concepts that are new. Integrating technology into her classroom is an effective way to connect with students of all learning styles. She teaches them how to think critically, solve problems, take initiative, work together, adapt to changes, communicate, find and analyze information and be accountable for their own learning .Her biggest compliment is having a student send a thank you card stating, “Thank you for believing I can find the answer myself.” Congratulate Anna Smith from Dallas Academy.

## **Tim Hagood**

### **Lakehill Preparatory School – High School**

Our next honoree is the Chairman of the Upper School English Department at Lakehill Preparatory School and has been on the staff for over 16 years. He teaches sophomores, seniors and Advanced Placement English. His experience as a language teacher revealed that while literacy can be a challenge for all students, some are naturally adept at reading and writing while others excel at the oral expression of ideas. Consequently, he created a group called “Quaker Discussions” in which students discuss their insights on the assigned texts in a free-flowing discussion amongst themselves. He does not participate, rather he observes and notes the quantity and quality of the thoughts the students express. Participating in the Quaker Discussions helps those less inclined in writing to get words on a page when they are called to do so.

As a member of the Lakehill community, he proposed the forming of an Honor Council, comprised of 3 faculty members, the presidents of the Student council, the Senior Class and the National Honor Society. One of the reasons it has endured is that the teachers on the committee get to see issues from the students’ perspective, while the students come away with a sense that “we’re all in this together.” His work with the National Jr. Honor Society and projects benefiting Hope Supply Co., the Vogel Alcove, For the Love of the Lake and the North Texas Food Bank has given him opportunities to personalize relationships with the students. This from a parent, “He prefers to seek recognition for the teachers in his department and to expand and promote the skills and accomplishments for his students and graduates. Being in the spotlight is just not his style.” She also has watched her son develop a new love of literature. After reading, *Invisible Cities* during her son’s sophomore literature class, this teacher thoughtfully gave the student a copy of the book as a gift. That dog-eared copy still resides on his bedside table 3 years later, having been read and reread countless times. We understand that you don’t like to be in the spotlight, but today is your turn!

Please congratulate Tim Hagood as Teacher of the Year.

# Teacher of the Year Winners 2018

Maria Pacheco - Martha Turner Reilly Elementary  
Susan Moreno - J. L. Long Middle School  
Megan Johnson - Skyline High School  
Sarah Lewis - Dallas Academy  
Kaye Hauschild - Lakehill Preparatory School  
Melissa Garcia - Dallas Academy



Megan Johnson, Skyline High School; Melissa Garcia, Dallas Academy; Sarah Lewis, Dallas Academy; Kaye Hauschild, Lakehill Preparatory School; Susan Moreno, J. L. Long Middle School; Maria Pacheco, Martha Turner Reilly Elementary.

**Nominees:** Alaina Atwood, Mount Auburn STEAM Academy; Anna Smith, Dallas Academy; Andrew Price, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School; Caitlin Schmidt, J. L. Long; Carlos Hernandez, Alex Sanger Elementary; Christine Abbott, St. Thomas Aquinas Lower School; Clayton Tucker, White Rock Elementary; Cody Norris, Bishop Lynch High School; Dan Garrison, Woodrow Wilson High School; Dayneidra Hamilton, Cesar Chavez Learning Center; Ellen Zimmerman, Dallas Academy; Elizabeth Leshner, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School; Emily Ford, Lakewood Elementary; Gabrielle Herrera, Jose "Joe" May Elementary School; Gloria Prieto, Lakewood Elementary; Jamie Masters, Lakewood Elementary; Jennifer Bunting, Harmony School of Innovation; Jennifer Herta, Lakehill Preparatory School; Katie Hamilton, Lakewood Elementary; Kerri MacIntyre, Alex Sanger Preparatory Middle School; Keshia Megie, Solar Preparatory School for Girls; Kristen Carpenter, Lakewood Elementary; Kristie Wainwright, Bishop Lynch High School; Laila A Cortes, Lakewood Elementary; Laura Gigliotti, Lakehill, Preparatory School; Leslie Reeves, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School; Martin Delabano, St. John's Episcopal School; Megan Williams Grados, Mockingbird Elementary; Mindy Nelson, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School; Rosaland McMillian, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School; Nadirah Shakir, J. L. Long Middle School; Rosemary Costello, Hexter Elementary; Sara Casner, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School; Sidrah Khan, Woodrow Wilson High School; Susan Parker, White Rock Elementary; Telesfora Guzman, Lake Highlands Elementary; Wendy Jackson, Piedmont GLOBAL Academy.

## **Susan Moreno-J L Long**

Ms. Morena has been in Dallas ISD and Long for 5 years and leads the Secondary Dual Language program as well serving as the World Language Department had over 4 different languages. She works with the counselors and administrators to make sure her DL students have equitable access to the Pre-AP and AP courses.

Ms. Moreno works with Donors Choose to request supplies to be funded to help students that may need help with materials needed for their projects. "Some of my favorites teaching moments is when students are excited to complete an assignment or project" such as a shoebox alter for the Day of the Dead holiday.

One-way Ms. Moreno engages the Long community is through the "Day of the Dead Dance" held by the World Language Department which celebrates the Hispanic holiday and gives students an opportunity to experience Latino culture through food and music.

Families are asked to support the dance by helping to decorate, chaperone or help to clean up after- the event has evolved into a big giant FIESTA!

Quotes from nomination:

"Susan faces each new day with a smile and a sense of pride"

"She has a whatever it takes mentality" and she "is an example of what all teachers should strive to be like"

"Ms. Moreno is a truly gifted teacher who inspires and ignites a love of learning among her students and colleagues."

Please help me to congratulate Teacher of the Year Susan Moreno!

## **Megan Johnson- Skyline**

### **Skyline High School 17 years**

#### **Career and Technical Education (CTE) teacher**

Partners with local colleges to assist students with college, financial aid and scholarship applications as well as scheduling campus tours so they can see the real-life college experience. Other ways Ms. Johnson helps her students to prepare for "real-life"- she incorporates budgeting, finances, resume writing, interview skills, ACT/SAT test prep- she invites military guest speakers and has developed "Ready.Set.Teach" program at Skyline which lets students job shadow professionals in the education and medical fields.

Spent the last 10 years as a professional development presenter for Dallas ISD presenting topics such as Student Engagement, Rigor and Relevance, Project Based Learning and Technology in the Classroom.

Ms. Johnson is Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America advisor- which is focused on creating leaders within the Skyline and Buckner Terrace community. Students in the group acquire community service opportunity and character development in effort to help bridge the gap between school and community.

Quotes from nomination:

"She is indeed vested in community engagement, accountability and student achievements"

"she understands the importance of college and career readiness and works diligently to expose her students to diverse opportunities and experiences both on and off campus".

Please help me to congratulate Teacher of the Year Megan Johnson



## **Sarah Lewis- Dallas Academy**

Ms. Lewis is an ALTA Certified Qualified Instructor and Certified Academic Language Therapist-trained over 60 teachers to become certified academic language therapists . She is always a licensed dyslexia therapist through the State of Texas.

Leads "Take Flight" instruction to the elementary and middle school students at Dallas Academy that have a formal diagnosis of dyslexia which is a comprehensive intervention curriculum for these students.

Ms. Lewis collaborates with Dallas Academy teachers and administrators on best instructional practices, assessment tools, and recommends strategies and assessment tools- creating the Instructional Action Plan form to help gather helpful information on each student. She is committed to curriculum development, program evaluation, development reading assessment as well as volunteered when it came time to completely reorganize the school library.

Quotes from nomination:

"Great teachers like Sarah Lewis are directly shaping the work of tomorrow by the work they are doing today"

Ms. Lewis' students "will be tomorrow's poets, storytellers, actors, artists, analysts, activists- whatever they dream they will achieve because Sarah has been a part of their life."

"Every child is loved. Every child is respected. Every child is beautiful. Sarah's greatness is in her ability to find every child's gifts."

Please help me to congratulate Teacher of the Year Sarah Lewis.

## **Kaye Hauschild- Lakehill Preparatory**

Over 40 years of educational experience- 34 years at Lakehill Head of Middle School for Lakehill Cheerleading sponsor for more than 30 years Sponsor of the Middle School Cooking Club Leads the Middle School Student Council and leader of the Middle School Community Connections Club- the largest club in the school. It is this group the meets weekly to engage in a variety of service projects. - making sandwiches for the homeless, sewing blankets for shelter animals and packing 1st aid kits for the elderly.

"In middle school we often feel that we are powerless- helping others make us feel powerful- each of us can make a difference in the lives of others, no matter our age"

All of this and she volunteered to take on teaching a 5th grade English class in addition to her 6th grade history.

Quotes from nomination:

"Ms. Hauschild strikes the perfect balance between providing structure while being the friendly voice a student needs when it all becomes 'too much'"

"she inspires all of us to do more and be more"

"if something's exceptional at Lakehill, rest assured that Ms. Hauschild has had a hand in creating or supporting it"

Please help me to congratulate Teacher of the Year Kaye Hauschild

## **Melissa Garcia- Dallas Academy**

Ms. Garcia has 15 years of teaching experience and has been with Dallas Academy since 2014. She is the English Department Head and designated College Advisor- developing the College Advising Program.

She has utilized her college connections to share college options in the Dallas area to her students as well as creating off-campus college visit programs for the Juniors and Seniors. In addition to her English courses, Ms. Garcia created a highly competitive and requested Debate elective course. Using the Lincoln-Douglas debate format she gives her students the confidence and encouragement to attempt higher order thinking.

Ms. Garcia is a native Dallasite, graduate of SMU and a current proud resident of East Dallas- likely to be seen around East Dallas volunteering with Love of the Lake, or as an active alumni of Bishop Lynch or possibly she and her family can be found cooling off during the summer at the Knights of Columbus pool.

### Quotes from nomination

"Melissa sets a positive climate for the school with her always positive attitude, constant smile and friendly demeanor"

"(she)understands the importance of seeing each student as an individual and creating a personalized path for them to follow"

"I love working with students in their senior year of high school. It gives me such joy to be there to guide my students at such an important and pivotal time in their school career".

**Maria Elena Pacheco- Martha Turner Reilly**  
**Received 6 nominations this year.**

Educator for over 25 years with the last 10 years with Martha Turner Reilly most recently teaching in the Dual Language program.

She leads the after-school Spanish Club, serves on the school's PTA board, volunteers with the early childhood group "Ready to be a Ram".

She is known as the teacher how "always shows up"- at the spirit night events, fundraisers, student's birthday parties, movie with the teacher, ice cream party with the teacher, even planning summer get-togethers so the students can practice Spanish so they don't lose the proficiency and can keep close relationships gained during the school year.

She takes on translating all of the posts on the Reilly and PTA Facebook pages into Spanish to better reach the Spanish speaking families at Reilly.

Quotes from nominations

"She is clearly dedicated to making Reilly the best school that she can and I can only imagine the world would be a better place if all students had a teacher like Ms. Pacheco"

"Our family has had the pleasure of getting to know her as our daughter's kindergarten and pt grad teacher in Reilly's dual language program" in which she "has continuously inspired us with her love for and dedication to both her job and her Reilly students"

"She is our very own wonder woman at Reilly Elementary"

"Ms. Pacheco is open, engaging, and welcoming to both the parents as well as the students, answering text message and emails at all hours."

Please help me to congratulate Teacher of the Year Maria Elena Pacheco

## Teacher of the Year Winners 2017

Austin Aeschbacher - Northlake Elementary School

Loretta Smith - W. H. Gaston Middle School

Chris Evetts - Woodrow Wilson High School

Lexi McClure - St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School

Ellen Kufel - Lakehill Preparatory School

Caroline Cooper - Dallas Academy



Chris Evetts, Woodrow Wilson High School; Loretta Smith, W. H. Gaston Middle School; Ellen Kufel, Lakehill Preparatory School; Austin Aeschbacher, Northlake Elementary School; Lexi McClure, St. Thomas Aquinas; Caroline Cooper, Dallas Academy.

## Congratulations to all our Nominees

Amy Burger, Austin Aeschbacher, Caitlin Knoll, Celestine Anderson, Charity Lewis, Creatine Anderson, Izy Balmori, Jonna Stout, Juan Meza, Karen Nealy, Katelyn Miskimins, Lorane Conde, Mrs. Quiroz, Natalie Hebert, Shonta White-Armstrong, Vanessa Damian, Flora Montez, Grant Williams, Loretta Smith, Lori Smith, Nathan Roub, Rochelle Grant, Elsy Serpas, Stephen Weigandt, Carol Ibarra, Diane Galvin, Leslie Avery, Lexi McClure, Peggi Gray, Laura Stout, Nancy Bigney, Hanaa Said, Ellen Kufel, Laura Gambrel, Caroline Cooper, Fernando Cepeda, Joseph Inman, Kristie Wainwright, Tracy Herron.

**Austin Aeschbacher**  
**Northlake Elementary**

- You realize you are about to read of an extraordinary teacher when the nomination begins: *The lights dim like a concert is about to begin. The music cranks up like a young DJ artist prepares to hit the stage. The crowd lights up with 28 glow sticks ready to groove. What do all of these images have in common? Mr. Aeschbacher the 5th grade science teacher at Northlake Elementary preparing his students to learn about science vocabulary.*
- He creates lessons that are engaging, fun and memorable- sometimes that means dressing as a pirate to teach a mixtures lab or turning one of the student's favorite songs into a lesson on energy.
- He is a writer; blogger and tweeter- you check follow him on his educational twitter account @PapaBacher where you can find him hosting chats with other educators from around the world.
- One of Mr. Aeschbacher's biggest impacts that he has made within the Richardson ISD community was the securing of the 1<sup>st</sup> Outdoor Harmony Garden. The Skyview Harmony Garden opened in the fall of 2016 and is an outdoor classroom that provides students from low socioeconomic backgrounds an opportunity to learn and engage in an outdoor space with the science and music curriculum.
- Mr. A was tasked to take over the "Invention Convention" competition for all of Richardson ISD and he continues to serve as a consultant.
- He embraces the districts mission statement that "all students can connect, learn, grow and succeed."
- Mr. Aeschbacher has said "Kids learn when we meet them where they are and take them where they need to be".

Please join me to thank and congratulate Teacher of the Year Austin Aeschbacher!

**Loretta Smith**  
**W H Gaston Middle School**

- Ms. Smith is known to demonstrate instructional expertise, creativity, and innovation.
- Every year, for the first day of school, she does an inquiry based lesson with her students where they make bread as a team, not knowing what the secret recipe will be. She uses this to determine who follows directions and who will need more help and guidance.
- Ms. Smith frequently interacts with community members on substantive education issues. For years she participated outside of her normal scope of duties with Altrusa International. With this group, she was able to get much needed supplies donated to students and staff.
- She participates in many home visits with her students to address their needs. Ms. Smith is always willing to tutor any student regardless of time- before, during and after school.
- Ms. Smith regularly attends extra-curricular activities of many students, to show them her support. She also is a coach for Destination Imagination, UIL Academics and Pentathlon.
- She often leads professional development for the whole staff and serves as the campus T.E.I. evaluation expert.
- She assisted in implementing a restorative practices program at our school that reaches out to all students and helps them cope with difficulties at home and academically. This program has helped in dramatically reducing suspension rates.
- From the nomination- “ Ms. Smith can relate in ways many others can't to our students, specifically the socioeconomically disadvantaged students, many of whom come from single parent or grandparent raised homes. She grew up with absent parents who ultimately gave up their legal rights as parents when she was three years old. Ms. Smith is able to reach students, most struggle to understand.”

Please join me to thank and congratulate Teacher of the Year Loretta Smith!

**Chris Evetts Woodrow  
Wilson High School**

- I am always impressed when a student submits a nomination. Our Public High School Teacher of the Year received seven nominations from his students.
- Chris Evetts is the director of the Woodrow Wilson High School Band.
- You may think that a high school band performs at the football games and maybe a homecoming parade. Not the case with the Woodrow band. You may have seen the band marching down the street from the high school to the neighborhood Rec Center to play for Hurricane Harvey evacuees. Or maybe it was marching in the Veterans Day Parade, the Light Up Lakewood Christmas event or the Lakewood 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade. Or performing in nursing homes, or the Swiss Avenue Mother's Day home tour. You may have seen them practicing for 2 hours before school one day? Or you may have seen them perform at UIL recently where they received 1<sup>st</sup> division rating. One nomination reads "Mr. Evetts has not only brought his students to believe in themselves individually and as a team, but he has brought to them the idea of community engagement"
- Pretty impressive- right? But what if I told you that when Mr. Evetts took over as band director the band consisted of about 10 students and now it is over 100 strong. From one nomination "He has transformed the once meek band into a powerhouse of well-behaved, dedicated, hard-working kids all while loving what they do."
- One of our nomination questions is "how does the nominee meet the criteria of Attention to Diversity?" My favorite response: "I'm a student. I don't know. He's an amazing band director that got us from the bottom to the top." I think that is what is called "cut to the chase"
- According to one of the nominations- "Our school is about 75% minority and over 50% economically disadvantaged. He has personally raised money so that those of lesser means are able to afford private lessons to get up to speed. He leads an annual fundraiser at the Granada Theater and recruits a famous group or musician to play with and mentor the band."

Please join me to thank and congratulate Teacher of the Year Chris Evetts!



**Lexi McClure**  
**St Thomas Catholic School**

- Ms. McClure is a 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher at St Thomas
- What impressed the Ms. McClure's nominator was her professionalism and communication- making sure the parents are informed and her students are challenged without ever feeling excluded from the other students.
- Ms. McClure's nomination was full of great examples of what a teacher of the year looks like: Great communication with parents, teaching students to be involved in the community, professional development and being a team leader within the school, having a great eye to notice the special things in each student. So many wonderful things about Ms. McClure that would make any parent ecstatic to have her teacher their 1<sup>st</sup> grader- for me – the words "First Grade Fairy Tale Ball" jumped right off the page. This event is a celebration of the end of the Fairy Tale unit for the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade. Ms. McClure created a true ball run by the parents. The students come to school on this day dressed as their favorite fairy tale character- and they celebrate with games, food and dance.
- Ms. McClure says " I look at each individual child as my own and I want nothing more than for them to be successful...We are all capable of success.....we are capable of finding it as long as the correct key is found to unlock the door in a loving, caring and safe environment."
- From Ms. Roberts- principal of St Thomas' lower school- "Lexi McClure's huge heart and love for her students, her bottomless toolbox of instructional strategies to help every kind of learner, her relentless commitment to each student's success, her kindness, her compassion, her integrity, her work ethic...these are just a few of her many gifts. Lexi McClure is so deserving of this recognition. We are so blessed to have her as a part of our Lower School family at St. Thomas! We are proud of her every single day and especially today as she receives this award as a Greater East Dallas Chamber of Commerce's Teacher of the Year!"

Please join me to thank and congratulate Teacher of the Year Lexi McClure!

**Ellen Kufel Lakehill**  
**Preparatory**

- Ms. Kufel teaches math to students in grades five through eight at Lakehill. She also sponsors the middle school Math Club, serves as the Seventh Grade Class Sponsor, Calendar Committee, Math Department Chair for kindergarten through grade seven as well as having coached middle school volleyball. (Whew)
- From the nomination “I have had many opportunities to observe the work that Ellen does – I am consistently amazed by the skills she is able to impart in her students and her boundless enthusiasm for providing opportunities to them”.
- Ms. Kufel says “My main goal is to encourage students to maintain their inherent curiosity, enter my classroom excited to be in math and ask ‘Is class over already?’ when it is time to leave”
- How does she do this? She uses technology, manipulatives, comics, humor, stories, and collaboration, partner and group challenges.
- She went above and beyond to explore a new math curriculum for adoption at Lakehill. “With patience and grace she guided the team to make a solid selection that met the right criteria and support of the team”.
- Ms. Kufel teaches summer camps which are open to all students in the East Dallas community who want to brush up on their math skills.
- You see how much of an impact Ms. Kufel has had on her students when you see their notes to her: “I’ve always loved math and having a great math teacher made me love it even more”. Or- “I love you so much it’s not even funny! Thanks for a wonderful season”.
- Ms. Kufel began teaching 28 years ago and says that “I could not be any more satisfied with my life’s choice. I didn’t choose teaching-it was already in my DNA. It is who I am”

Please join me to thank and congratulate Teacher of the Year Ellen Kufel!

## Caroline Cooper Dallas Academy

- You may see Ms. Cooper often in East Dallas. Ms. Cooper is a long time resident of Little Forest Hills and in addition to her teaching role at Dallas Academy she is active with her children's school Alex Sanger. She volunteers at For the Love of the Lake and will often be found biking around the lake.
- I first met Ms. Cooper as part of Leadership ISD- a program focused on advancing educational excellence and equity by informing and connecting leaders in our community.
- Ms. Cooper's passion for teaching is evident in the relationships she develops with her students and her ability to understand the unique needs of each student.
- She utilizes specialized and varied learning techniques such as SMART board technology, 3D visual aids and supportive videos. As a history teacher she works to make connections of history's conflicts to the challenges that her own students face in their daily lives. A colleague says "Caroline works to make history a living experience for her students." She is often off campus taking student to local museums, exhibits, The White House situation room at the Bush Library and Dallas City Hall
- Last year I was able to participate in Ms. Cooper's American History student's presentation of the Gettysburg Address. Each student memorized and recited the speech with the winners reciting the address at City Hall for the council and Mayor Rawlings.
- Ms. Cooper says "I want my students to develop a curiosity of the work around them and challenge them to be life-long learners"

Please join me to thank and congratulate Teacher of the Year Caroline Cooper!

## Teacher of the Year Winners 2016

John David du Mars, Emmett J. Conrad High School  
Shelly Thibodaux, Robert T. Hill Middle School  
Kent Benson, Robert E. Lee Elementary  
Amy Duke, Bishop Lynch High School  
Amy Delaney, Dallas Academy  
Casey Pike, Lakehill Preparatory School



Andrea Sanders, Greater East Dallas Chamber of Commerce Chairman; Amy Delaney, Dallas Academy; Casey Pike, Lakehill Preparatory School; Amy Duke, Bishop Lynch High School; Kent Benson, Robert E. Lee Elementary; John David du Mars, Emmett J. Conrad High School; Shelly Thibodaux, Robert T. Hill Middle School; Cheryl Barnes, Teacher Awards Chairman.

Congratulations to all our nominees

Austin Aeschbacher, Hilred Azan, Amanda Batson, Martha Adriana Castellanos, Maria Cedillo, Laura Laywell, Leticia Nelson, Stacy Holbrook Olson, Mary Piirto, Juan Quesada, Elsy Serpas, Debra Valle, Tequila Butler, Erin Chesal, Mr. Compton, Jennifer Munguia, Mia Witt, Becky Brown, Cheryl Harris, Johnetta Koukalik, Matthew Lundberg, Krystal Morrow, Ross Smeltzer, Angela Tejada, Marlene Hewitt, Penny Lalanne, Patty Pippen, Allison Albani, Latricia Davis, Bianca Gruben-Trejo.

## Winners 2016 Teacher of the Year Awards

**Kent Benson**

**2016 Winner- Public School/ Lower Grades**

**Robert E Lee Elementary School**

- Mr. Benson began teaching in Dallas ISD in 1980 and has been at Lee for 24 years. He now teaches 2<sup>nd</sup> grad in Lee's two-way dual language program

- Students love how Mr. Benson fosters cooperative learning by pairing up Spanish and English speaking students to help each other learn. 4-person tables work together to earn points for end-of-the-week prizes (such as Martian erasers and 4-colored pens- all purchased with his own money)
- Last year students organized a petition to have Mr. Benson named “Cool Cougar”-an honor that is normally reserved for a student.
- Mr. Benson is a member of the Campus Instructional Leadership Team. He has chaired the campus Language Proficiency Assessment Committee as well as chairing one of the very early SBDMs at Lee (site based decision making committee).
- To continue to improve his Spanish skills he spent two summers studying at the University of Salamanca Spain, a program for bilingual teachers.
- He has such strong connections to his students that now Mr. Benson’s former students return to his classroom as the parents of his current students. He has even received a family video this year for his birthday.

**From nomination:**

The principal of Robert E Lee, Mr. Hart, says of Mr. Benson “I believe that one of Mr. Benson’s best qualities, and he has many, is the quiet intensity with which he teaches. He is a very kind person and treats everyone-children and adults alike-with great sincerity”.

Please help me congratulate Teacher of the Year, Kent Benson

**Shelly Thibodaux**

**2016 Winner- Public School/ Middle Grades**

**Robert T Hill Middle School**

- Ms. Thibodaux began her career in the Dallas ISD in 1987 and is currently the Physical Education, Partner PE, coach and Athletic Director at Hill- since 2005
- She was the first person to serve at the districts newly created Female Athletic Coordinator for Bryan Adams HS in the mid 2000’s.
- She uses creative and innovative methods to teach her students- currently incorporating graphing with the use of data gained by the student’s use of pedometers. Through the uses of iPads her student’s entries in the district wide TechFest are award winning.
- The Hill PE Dept. has received local recognition as a Healthy Zone School
- Through participation in Girl Scouting in the School Day she has lead STEM based projects through Cookie Box Creations
- Through her leadership Hill has had the most participants in the Dallas Mayors Race of all DISD MS.
- Ms. Thibodaux has been the KayCee Club Pool Manager since 1999- hiring students from areas schools to work as lifeguards- also using this position for opportunities for fund raising events- raising tens of thousands of dollars to help fund field trips, overnight science camps and STEM activities.
- The number of awards, recognitions, and accolades are amazing- when you have a moment please take a look at Ms. Thibodaux’s nomination on the Greater East Dallas Chamber website.

**From nomination:**

Ms. Thibodaux demonstrates creativity and innovation in nearly everything she does.

Please help me congratulate Teacher of the Year, Shelly Thibodaux

**John David DuMars**  
**2016 Winner- Public School/ Upper Grades**  
**Emmett J. Conrad High School**

- Mr. DuMars teaches ESL students from dozens of cultural backgrounds requiring an exception amount of teaching expertise, sensitivity, and innovation
- He is the Conrad ESL Department Chair and his classes are regularly visited and observed by other teachers from across Dallas ISD- new teachers particularly have found practical ideas to implement in their classrooms
- Mr. DuMars co-led a regional TESOL workshop at the Fall 2015 conference in Arlington- exhibiting leadership and motivation.
- He frequently works with the DISD Refugee Coordinator to reach out to the local refugee community- striving to work with families to keep ESL students in school.
- Mr. DuMars ESL 1 class consistently performs well above district average on tests. His students average between 65-90% passing rates on end of semester tests- which is 20%-40% **over** the district average.
- He is the soccer coach at Conrad- sometimes picking up students for practice and taking that time to get to know and understand their families.

**From nomination:**

Mr. DuMars states that “all students know that their cultures are respected and honored in my classroom. In addition to English, my students learn about mutual respect and tolerance, which is perhaps the most valuable lesson of all”

Please help me congratulate Teacher of the Year, David DuMars

**Casey Pike**  
**2016 Winner- Private School/Lower Grades**  
**Lakehill Preparatory**

- Casey is known to stay on the cutting edge of the subjects she teaches, her collaboration with her fellow teachers, and her endless generosity with her time and skills
- She was an early adopter of coding instruction in the lower school- reminding everyone that “coding is not a fad”. Her students has been creating and using QR codes for research for years.
- Ms. Pike is also the lower school librarian- she reads the Bluebonnet nominees every year so that she can recommend the perfect book to each reader-students go to her for recommendations and often find their “new favorite book” with her help.
- She offers a computer and technology club for kids, a Birthday Book Club, Word Warriors Book Club.

- She has also been the faculty sponsor for “Sisteens” an all-girls community service group for the upper schoolers
- Lastly Ms. Pike wears the title of Lakehill’s “Lunch Lady”- she volunteered to take on the daily duty and has become one of her favorite ways to interact with students.

**From nomination:**

I believe that Casey Pike is precisely the kind of teacher that we want to recognize as teacher of the year. She makes Lakehill Preparatory School a better place for students and faculty alike- each day that she walks through the front door.

Please help me congratulate Teacher of the Year, Casey Pike

**Amy Delaney  
2016 Winner- Private School/Middle Grades  
Dallas Academy**

- Ms. Delaney is a hands on teacher who has created a learning environment that is rigorous, thoughtful, challenging and innovative.
- She brings science lessons to life with real world applications- such as her involvement in the National Engineers Future City Competition- 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students create a future city from recycled materials. The projects involves building a scale model, writing an essay, creating a city plan, participate in computer simulations all culminating in a team presentation to a panel of judges. Dallas Academy has won over \$3000 in cash and prizes from this event- having won 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Top Five Finals in 2014. Her students also participate in a Rube Goldberg Project- which involves building a 15 step machine with convoluted chain reactions to accomplish a simple task.
- In addition to being a Life Science, Earth Science and Physics Teacher- Ms. Delaney is the Science Department head, middle school lead teacher, assistant varsity volleyball coach, chess club sponsor, and chaperone and sponsor of the Spanish and Science International Trip.
- Ms. Delaney feels that she was called to the teaching profession- inspired by her family to work at a learning difference school. With a sister who has autism, ODD, ADD, ADHD- she saw the struggles to get the services required. “I wanted to become a teacher to help families avoid the pain and heartbreak of feeling like their student couldn’t succeed or fit in”.

**From nomination:**

When I think of what makes a great teacher, many things comes to mind- but without a doubt- the teacher that stands out is Amy Delaney.

Please help me congratulate Teacher of the Year, Amy Delaney

**Amy Duke**  
**2016 Winner- Private School/Upper Grades**  
**Bishop Lynch**

- At Bishop Lynch Ms. Duke is a leader in educational technology. She was 1 of 2 teachers to flip their classrooms.
- What is a “flipped classroom”- it is a model in which the typical lecture and homework assignments of a class are reversed. Students will watch short video lectures at home before the class- while the in-class time is dedicated to exercises, projects, or discussions.
- Ms. Duke and her flipping partner have shared their experience at the University of Dallas Ministry Conference, the Region 10 Private School Showcase in 2015 and this year Ms. Duke will present her teacher research “How to Flip Your Classroom and Stick the Landing” at the National Catholic Educators of America Conference in St Louis.
- She has developed a semester long math class for students who were deficient in their math credits their senior year as well as help develop and redesign an program for incoming freshman who have low entrance exam scores
- She coordinates, plans, and organizes the Annual Senior retreat since 2007.
- And if that were not enough- Ms. Duke is beginning her PHD in Higher Education in January.

**From nomination:**

Ms. Duke’s objective is to inspire and engage students to think logically and critically, communicate effectively and become responsible citizens.

Please help me congratulate Teacher of the Year, Amy Duke



## 2015 Teacher of the Year Winners

Cristela Nash - Robert E. Lee Elementary School (Public Elementary)  
Ashley Roe - Dallas Academy (Private Elementary)  
Elizabeth Schmitt - Lakehill Preparatory School (Private Middle School)  
Richard (Rick) Lee Harrington - Townview Magnet (Public High School)  
Billy Clark - Bishop Lynch High School (Private High School)

**Winners will receive a \$250 gift card and \$100 will be sent to their schools.**



Cristela Nash - Robert E. Lee Elementary School; Ashley Roe - Dallas Academy; Elizabeth Schmitt - Lakehill Preparatory School; Billy Clark - Bishop Lynch High School

### **We also want to recognize and congratulate the 2015 nominees**

Aron Alfaro, Thelma Richardson Elementary; Karalynn Brown, Mount Auburn Elementary; Geraldine Luke, S. S. Conner Elementary; Sandra Esther Urton, John Quincy Adams Elementary; Elizabeth Gomez, Uplift Peak Preparatory; Elizabeth Halasz, Uplift Peak Preparatory; Meredith Sauer, Lakehill Preparatory School; Alexis

McClure, St. Thomas Aquinas; Kristen Cruise Murphy, St. Thomas Aquinas; Claire Galvin, St. Thomas Aquinas Middle School; Sara Harris, Dallas Academy; Stephanie Gossette, W. W. Samuell High School; Lisa Moya King, Woodrow Wilson High School; Pete Grieder, Lake Highlands High School; Megan Massey, Lake Highlands High School; Rhianna Anglin, Lake Highlands High School; Brook Varner, Woodrow Wilson High School; Dr. Thelma Benavides, Multiple Careers Magnet School; Maria Rodriguez, Bishop Lynch High School; Susan Noonan, Bishop Lynch High School; Dr. Martina Kroll, Lakehill Preparatory School; Cody Norris, Bishop Lynch High School; Patty Barton, Bishop Lynch High School.

## **Private Elementary**

### **Ashley Roe - Dallas Academy**

- Ms. Roe is a Lead Teacher in the lower school at Dallas Academy
- She is “that teacher”...the one that parents request and students hope to get.
- Ms. Roe works with students that have learning differences. You will hear “Mistakes mean you are learning” or “It doesn’t have to be perfect”, “you matter” when you are in her classroom.
- Having so many mixed levels of students in her class she works to make accommodations for classwork and homework. She uses technology to support learning- computers, Smartboards, I pads.
- Ms. Roe is also a volleyball coach at Dallas Academy and “everyone can play” is her motto.
- In addition to teaching and coaching- she helps to organize speakers for Career Week- bringing in professionals in Horticulture, Law Enforcement and more- to effort to prepare students for their own personal journeys.
- Ms. Roe believes in offering words of encouragement and keeping parents a part of the student’s progress. She regularly sends home notes and emails to brag on how her students.
- Ms. Roe’s nomination came with photos from her classroom- you see her engaging with her students during “Pirate Day”, making mummies in history, examples of her math center. Each photo full of bright smiling faces.

Quotes from nomination

“Ms. Roe is the greatest math teacher ever. I don’t want anyone else. She is strict but nice. She knows how to help me learn in a fun way”

## **Private High School**

### **Coach Billy Clark - Bishop Lynch High School**

- Received 5 nominations!! All student nominations
- Teaches Health
- Coaches both the men and women’s Track and Cross Country along with a Strength & Conditioning Camp
- Moderator & Leader of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes along with the Sports Leadership Club.
- Leads service projects such as “necessity bags” provided to homeless and a school supply drive for neighbor school Truett Elementary
- Holds weekly bible study for students as well as weekly bible study for faculty.

Quotes from nominations:

“Coach Clark sets the example for how to be a professional in all aspects of his life. He shows us the way to act and inspires us to follow our dreams and be the best we can be”

“He reaches out a hand to everyone in the school, even if he was never their coach or teacher.”

**Public Elementary**  
**Cristela Nash - Robert E Lee Elementary School**

- Mrs. Nash was the inaugural Kindergarten teacher for the 2-way, Dual Language Immersion Program at Robert E Lee 3 years ago (Program is very demanding....70% of class taught in Spanish however class is roughly equal number of English speaking as those who are English as a second language. She does an amazing job getting both sets of students working together to help each other- both groups see their language skills improve.
- As a member of the instructional leadership team at Lee she is helping the school in adopting the IB (International Baccalaureate) program by translating all the materials so that they can be implemented in a way that is faithful to the dual language program.
- Mrs. Nash makes sure that Robert E Lee feels welcoming to both English and Spanish speaking parents- she helps make sure all communications are translated as well as attending the PTA meetings to translate.
- During her first year at Lee she saw the need for more tools to foster communication among her students while they were still learning each other's languages- so she initiated a project via Donors Choose and was able to raise over \$300 to purchase Reading Manipulatives for the classroom.
- She recently utilized resources available through the district to start the afterschool Chess Club.
- She lives in East Dallas and is committed to the neighborhood and is excited to help improve the education offered in the neighborhood feeder pattern.

Quote from nomination

“She has attained near-legendary status amongst the parents who have been lucky enough to have her teach their children.”

“Simply put she is a phenomenal teacher who richly deserves any recognition she receives”

**Public High School**  
**Richard Harrington - Townview Magnet**

- 30 years teaching (25 years in DISD)
- Mr. Harrington teaches in the Reconnections Program which is a drop-out prevention / drop-out recovery program that provides support to students at risk.
- Mr. Harrington had to develop creative techniques to help reach his students- as a result, for many students it was the first time they had success in school and despite having once dropped out of school- they would then go on to college after graduation.
- Mr. Harrington is part of Alliance of Dallas Educators where he supports colleagues as well as sharing his teaching techniques at Education Service Center Region 10.

- He uses social media to keep others up to date with education issues through his blog and tweets as well as speaking up at DISD Board Meetings.
- Utilizes non-profits and community resources whenever possible to help students- such as partnering with a parishioner at St Thomas Aquinas , where he is a Deacon, to provide an “air-card” so students can access internet for school assignments.

**From nomination:**

Recently a former student came by to visit Mr. Harrington after completing his basic training for the Marines. The student said that he was able to complete the training because of the discipline and preparations that he learned from Mr. Harrington.

**Private Middle School  
Elizabeth Schmitt - Lakehill Preparatory**

- Teaches English and Literature- 15 years at Lakehill
- Sponsors National Honor Society, Shakespeare and Friends, and the Improv Club
- Serves as a peer mentor to new teachers at Lakehill
- Editor of the schools weekly Email Newsletter
- Ms. Schmitt uses literature to foster meaningful connections with her students-to help them to learn to navigate the world- bridging literary works to historically events as well as current and relevant issues.
- Beginning of each class Ms. Schmitt writes a quote on the board and encourages students to write in their journal for 5 minutes. This activity promotes not just self-expression but gives her students an arena to vent their feelings which are often confused, frustrated, and angry- providing a safe, non-judgmental outlet.
- True joy is teaching Shakespeare to her students. Through her “Sonnets Project” students build higher reading level and critical thinking skills- she especially loves the moment when a student smiles because he or she understands joke, or connects with the words or ideas.
- Community engagement includes her training to be a group leader for Sh’ma Emanuel program, as well as sharing her experience after losing her husband to help guide other widows to appropriate grief counseling and support groups- creating a blog to share her journey as a source of encouragement and hope.

Quotes from nomination:

“Ms. Schmitt is really invested in making sure we understand the material and is committed to making learning fun”

“She encourages us and makes us feel as though our opinion matters.”

From Ms. Schmitt

“The smile of recognition from a student or a thank you note at the end of the year or years later...are my most treasured prizes”

# 2014 Teacher of the Year Winners

Jeannot ("Johnny") Jonte Boucher - Mata Montessori  
Dana Czapski - Gaston Middle School  
Denise Tucker - Woodrow Wilson High School  
Katie Wendorf - St Thomas Aquinas  
Madeline Schnurr - St Thomas Aquinas  
Jamie Thorne - Lakehill Preparatory School



Jeannot ("Johnny") Jonte Boucher - Mata Montessori; Katie Wendorf - St Thomas Aquinas; Dana Czapski - Gaston Middle School; Jamie Thorne - Lakehill Preparatory School; Madeline Schnurr - St Thomas Aquinas; Denise Tucker - Woodrow Wilson High School.

Nominees: Emeremciana Calvillo, Casa View; Jeremy Civello, Dallas Academy; Ivelisse Colon, Charles Gill; Peter Evett, Woodrow Wilson; Linda Freis, St Thomas Aquinas; Donna Glennon, Bishop Lynch; Elizabeth Halasz, Uplift Peak Preparatory; Stephanie Hale, Martha T. Reilly; Tim Hester, Bishop Lynch; Michele Hollingsworth, St Thomas Aquinas; Carol Ibarra, St Thomas Aquinas; Robert Irby, Woodrow Wilson; Victoria John, Lakehill Preparatory School; Dottie Lucas, St Thomas Aquinas; Barbara Morris, Mount Auburn; Rebecca Paris, Mount Auburn; Ellen Pool, Stonewall Jackson; Rosaland Ratcliffe, St Thomas Aquinas; Minerva Ortiz Reyes, Kiest; Terri Riley, St Thomas Aquinas; Tricia Roos, Bishop Lynch; Alexandra Sabater, Mount Auburn; Jeneace Salazar, Hexter; Meredith Sauer, Lakehill Preparatory School; Elizabeth Schmitt, Lakehill Preparatory School; Julie Scoville, St Thomas Aquinas; Ginny Simank, Dallas Academy; William (Bill) Storey, Bishop Lynch; Delaine Taylor, Bishop Lynch.

## Public Schools

## **Jeannot ("Johnny") Jonte Boucher - Mata Montessori**

We are only six weeks in to the school year and I think I've already lost track of all the things Mr. Jonte Boucher has done for his classroom of pre-K and kindergarteners at Mata Montessori. He won a \$2,000 grant from the Junior League of Dallas: Grants for Innovative Teaching for his "Lots of Librarians" program. The grant will encourage Mata students to role-play as librarians, check out books, make recommendations, and assign due dates. The grant will provide for 330 new books for the classroom library at Mata Montessori. Mr. Jonte Boucher took it upon himself last spring to fundraise via Donors Choose for 20 subscriptions to a weekly reader for kindergarteners. It cost \$300 for the subscriptions. And, in recent weeks he has arranged for the DISD psychologist (LCSW) to come to the classroom once a week to teach mindfulness meditation to the students in class. He communicates frequently with parents to keep us informed as to what is happening in the classroom and keeps a scholarly blog about Montessori schooling: [MontessoriDiscoveries.blogspot.com](http://MontessoriDiscoveries.blogspot.com). He occasionally posts pictures of the school day to Instagram while maintaining students' privacy and never showing the children's faces in the pictures. He's mindful of the financial demands on families these days: when he asked for manuscript paper for children to practice handwriting, he even found an online source where the paper was on sale. When he hoped for a set of hand bells for class, he set up an online funding campaign with matching funds. He secured a grant to get a pair of guinea pigs for the class, and brings in his own pair of pet birds, too. He is a tireless advocate in the community, too. You cannot meet him and be unmoved by his enthusiasm. What a treasure for East Dallas.

Mr. Jonte Boucher worked tirelessly to prepare his pre-K and kindergarten classroom for the new Montessori opening of Mata Elementary. He gave up his summer to attend full-day training each day at the Montessori Institute of North Texas, from a week after school was out until August, and enthusiastically shares what he learned in an education blog and newsletters to parents with his articles about child development. We are in constant contact with Mr. Boucher through Remind texts and personal calls to make sure that every child is right on track. This school year, in all his "free time", Mr. Boucher has won FOUR grants, one being a \$2000 classroom non-fiction library from The Junior League and Texas Instruments, a class subscription to Weekly Reader, a Pets in the Classroom grant, and a Donors Choose crowd-funded grant for a class set of professional hand bells for daily music lessons for the children. Mr. Boucher says that there is an undiscovered prodigy in the class with incredible talent for music- we just have to find out who it is! We get the sense that Mr. Boucher believes in each child in the class, and it makes sense that he received the award for Innovative Teaching from The Junior League. To increase literacy engagement, Mr. Boucher designed a game where children role-play little librarians. The goal is to increase how much time the kids want to pick up and read books, to make it fun. He is so organized about getting our class involved in art contests, like our school's Storybook Pumpkin, where we are turning our pumpkin into Mercer Mayer's "Little Critter" character. It makes books come alive for the students. He has them in stitches reading those books, and now all the children are begging to check them out to take home. Everything that Mr. Boucher learns in his Montessori training, he shares with parents, so we can understand the special method coming alive at Mata. It is going to be incredible for the children who get to be in his class for three years, because Mr. Boucher has two more years of this graduate training to share with those families. Our kids come home singing in French and Chinese, signing words and sounds in American Sign Language, and retelling stories from around the world. There's so much more we could say, but I have never known a more engaged and creative teacher than Mr. Boucher.

### **Dana Czapski W.H. Gaston Middle School**

Who says that excellence in teaching takes many years to achieve? I cannot think of a more deserving candidate for this award than Dana Czapski. Ms. Czapski is only in her third year of teaching and has quickly established herself as a science powerhouse. Last year, as a second year teacher, we moved Ms. Czapski to our critical needs area of 8th grade Science. While some may have cringed at the thought of not only having one of the toughest grades in the building, but also one of the state's most difficult content tested STAAR areas, Dana stepped into the role with enthusiasm, leadership, and most importantly, her dazzling smile. It is not often, that I see a teacher that students clamor around constantly. I mean from the moment she arrives in the building, to the moment she walks out of the door. Seriously, before Ms. Czapski even arrives, students are sitting outside of her door. No, they don't have tutoring; no, they are not in trouble: they just like to talk to her before school and during their lunch and hang out in her room after school! She has developed such a positive rapport with students that even kids she does not teach stop by her classroom simply say hi. Last year, she was voted "Kid's Choice" teacher by the students in our building at least four times. Her teaching technique is one to be admired. She keeps the students so engaged, there is no time for disruptions. For example, as a test review, the students compete in a scavenger hunt as they work with their teammates to find the answers. Her students have so much fun, they do not even realize they are learning. I cannot remember her ever having to write a student discipline referral. Her positive rapport with the students makes them want to behave and perform better for her. Students want to be in her class. Last year as a second year teacher she had 89% of her students pass the 8th grade STAAR assessment. The state average was only 78%. Talk about a science rockstar! Ms. Czapski is also Coach Czapski. She coached our girls soccer team and the team had an excellent season. She is the student council sponsor for our school and serves as pod leader for her 8<sup>th</sup> grade team. She also serves as an active member of our Student Incentive Committee to help plan rewards for our school's most outstanding students. Ms. Czapski is a true leader. She is a team player on the field and in the classroom. She does not complain about the student's academic weaknesses, but meets them where they are and grows their academic knowledge. I believe that without teachers like Ms. Czapski, we would fall short of giving students the total education experience and helping them to understand that classroom lessons don't always come from a book. With a Ms. Czapski in your school, there is no doubt that students will receive both academic and extracurricular enhancement.

### **Denise Tucker - Woodrow Wilson High School**

Denise, time and time again, goes the extra mile for her students at Woodrow Wilson High School. Her work as the director for the Academy of Finance is helping to equip students far beyond the classroom. Mrs. Tucker reached out to me this past year to see how our congregation could come alongside the students at Woodrow to provide mentoring. She also connects professionals from all over the metroplex on her board of advocates for the Academy of Finance, which allows her students to have life-changing internships as they discern their steps after graduation.

Denise is constantly looking at her program, deciphering what her students' needs are, and finding ways to meet those needs. All of her hard work is directed towards equipping her students with the skills and experiences they will need to achieve their dreams.

Denise exemplifies what it means to be an advocate. Her students are better off because she is a part of their lives. Woodrow Wilson is better off because she is a part of its leadership. The East Dallas community is better off because of her involvement in the lives of our young people. We would do well to celebrate her achievements by extending this honor to Denise Tucker.

Students often comment about not being able to use what they learn in the “real world,” especially when they talk about algebra. They do not make comments like that regarding the classes taught by Denise Tucker. Not only is she the Director of the Academy of Finance at Woodrow Wilson, but she also teaches a great number of the business classes. One of these classes is “Principles of Business Marketing and Finance” where students develop a business plan for a real product they can take to market. In 2013 Ms. Tucker mentored 10<sup>th</sup> grade student Valerie Villaneuva helping her take the product to the national level of the competition. Last year she mentored Shelby Patterson, a junior, to achieve Junior Achievement Student of the Year for North Texas Region. Of the four finalists for the regions, three were from Woodrow. Ms. Tucker’s vision for the Academy of Finance is to help students from all socio-economic backgrounds to understand how to maneuver the business world – not just in theory, but in practice IN the “real world”.

Denise Tucker is the department head for the Woodrow Academy of Finance as well as its primary teacher. I was PTA President from 2012-2014 and worked very closely with Ms. Tucker. Of all the teachers that I got to know, I was most impressed with her dedication to her students and the school. I also knew if at any time that I needed to find her after 5:00 p.m. that she would still be in her classroom tutoring a student or helping a group with a project. She left the private sector where she was making much more money to come and teach because she has a strong calling to make children's futures’ better. But what has most impressed me is how well her students respect and honor her. As a current parent at Woodrow and when I was the PTA President I made it a common practice to ask students about their experience with Ms. Tucker and students have always had nothing but good things to say about her. I know from watching her that she will spend her own money to assist students when they need it. Just last month she drove up to Oklahoma to attend the graduation of one of her former students, giving up her personal weekend. Of all the academies at the school, she has some of the most challenging students but she never gives up on any. As former PTA President, I believe she is the most outstanding teacher I have had the pleasure to work with. Please call and I can give more examples.

## **Private Schools**

### **Katie Wendorf – St. Thomas Aquinas**

*“There are many good teachers at our school, but Mrs. Wendorf really stands out as one of the best any of my children have had. She is incredibly organized, invested in the children and compassionate. At every turn, Mrs. Wendorf exceeded my expectations. I wish we had more like her!” -- 2012 Parent*

*“I can't tell you how thankful I am that both my boys had you for their first grade teacher. They both absolutely adored you and made so much progress. I really feel like Ben is really ready for 2nd grade!” -- 2013 Parent*

Quotes like these from my students’ parents are not only humbling, but also they remind me that I am fortunate to be doing the job I was called to do. As a first grade teacher, I am laying the foundation for a love of school and love of learning. I have made a conscious choice to teach in Catholic schools because I believe in the character education that the Catholic school curriculum provides. I emphasize creativity in my classroom and have developed many tools and strategies for meeting my students’ needs at this important age. Parents appreciate my communications with them, my organization skills, and my genuine interest in their children’s learning.

I have invested in my leadership and development throughout my teaching career. I have been teaching first grade for 16 years. I earned my Texas Teaching Certification in 2005, before it was required by the Dallas Diocese. I have served on a variety of committees such as the Diocesan speech/language team and Catholic Schools Week committee. I attend conferences and seminars to gather the latest research that I can adapt to my classroom. My most recent conferences include Kim Sutton Math, Love and Logic, and the University of



Dallas Ministry Conference. Often times, I gather with my colleagues to share new things I've learned and to motivate them to try new things in their classroom. As the senior teacher in my school's four sections of first grade, I am in a position to mentor the younger teachers. I believe this is critical to keep good teachers in our profession. I had a terrific mentor early in my career, and now I am "paying it forward" by advising and supporting my younger colleagues.

*"Words cannot express what you have done for our child this year. She hated school until she got in your class."*  
-- 2013 Parent

*"...you have made a significant positive impact on Nadia. She adores you. Over the last school year, I've seen a great increase in her self-confidence and desire to learn. I'm most certain this improvement with Nadia is due to your talent set and special interest."* -- 2013 parent

*"Mrs. Wendorf is the teacher I have dreamed of my son having for 3 years."* -- 2014 Parent

*"You should really hire more teachers like Katie Wendorf."* -- 2011 Parent

*"You couldn't make these kids feel more loved if you tried."* -- 2014 Parent

*"She was and still is the best teacher we have ever had. She changed my son's life."* -- 2012 Parent

### **Madeline Schnurr - St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School**

Madeline Schnurr, STA 5th grade literature, math, and religion teacher has truly impacted my life (one of her 6th grade students), as well as many others. Everyday students looked forward to seeing and going to the fun, exciting, and energetic classes of Ms.Schnurr. Every subject she teaches, she shows great skill and knowledge in sharing it with her own classes. Ms.Schnurr has not only made an impact in ST A's families, but in other schools, churches, and nephews. Ms.Schnurr showed great courage and compassion when her brother Jimmy Schnurr, was diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer on October 30, 2012. Throughout the year she applied this topic very joyfully, and a great opportunity for her to grow a closer relationship with God. She participated in many activities supporting her sick, but brave brother in the fight with Pancreatic Cancer. For example, she participated in the annual Pancreatic Cancer "Purple Out" Walk SK, as well as donating her savings to the cause and research.

She also, had her class bring in supplies to make "Comfort Kits" for nurses to hand out while the patients waiting for Chemo therapy. Not only, did these bags brighten the patients receiving the gifts, but it also gave her students the power knowing that they had brightened someone's day when they were in need. Unfortunately, her brother lost his fight with Pancreatic Cancer on the evening of September 18, 2014 with Ms. Schnurr right by his side. Also, Ms. Schnurr took time out of her days and weekends to attend teacher conventions or to help watch her nephews as their Dad was *in* treatment. She was always looking for ways to make a boring topic fun, or a well-known book exciting. The year was filled with many exciting activities that were introduced to the school by Ms. Schnurr. For instance, students participated in the Global Read Aloud, an event where classes all over world read the same book, and then Skype with each other about their mixed emotions about the book Also, students participated in Dot Day, a book by Peter Reynolds where the book explains how we can all make a change in the World, no matter who or what we are. As you can see, Ms.Schnurr has made many people's lives brighter, happier, more-religious, and more intelligent through the giving and caring power of Ms. Madeline Schnurr.

Ms. Schnurr utilized numerous resources in her instruction. Using the latest technology including her SMART board, and various online resources, and trips to the library for hardcopy research, and field trips - she accommodates different learning styles. Community Engagement: Ms. Schnurr lost her brother, Jimmy, to pancreatic cancer just last month. Throughout her brother's illness, she held her chin high, creating a learning

moment for her students. She used Jimmy's struggle to teach the children about compassion, encouraging them to find ways to help the sick. Her students created care packages en masse for children in the hospital. Jimmy's struggle, Ms. Schnurr's struggle became a life lesson for her students. One that the children and parents will not forget, and for which we are thankful.

Ms. Schnurr is a past recipient of the Catholic Foundation's Work of Heart Award, recognizing local Catholic school administrators, teachers and staff for tenure and leadership, acts of kindness or charity, Christian example, mentoring and simply going the extra mile for an individual student, family or the community.

### **Jamie Thorne Lakehill Preparatory School**

Ms. Thorne is a high school teacher at Lakehill Preparatory School, teaching World History, Government, and Economics. As a parent of a Lakehill student, as well as a school employee, I have had many opportunities to observe the work that Ms. Thorne does. I am consistently amazed by her extreme professionalism and her boundless enthusiasm for providing opportunities to her students. In addition to teaching a full load of classes, Ms. Thorne serves as the Department Chair for Lakehill's Social Studies Department. She also sponsors a number of highly active student organizations. While most teachers would be satisfied to sponsor one group, Ms. Thorne sponsors Student Council, Debate Club (participating in both State Affairs Forum and Model United Nations), Warrior Outreach Organization, Mock Trial, and Rho Kappa. Amazingly, each of these groups is incredibly involved on our campus and she is an enthusiastic mentor and supporter for each. Ms. Thorne is an exceptional teacher whose students love her and look forward to her classes.

She actively engages all learners through a variety of techniques. She is well known on campus for her student-centered classroom, often engaging in Socratic seminars or student-centered discussions. The expectations in her class are high, and students respond well to the challenges she gives them. Ms. Thorne is also an exceptional role model to her peers, and serves as a mentor to new teachers at Lakehill.

Ms. Thorne is actively involved in the community, leading service projects in the community and facilitating a variety of Youth in Government activities for children outside of Lakehill through the YMCA. She leads by example, and is enthusiastic in her service to others. Many assume that students in private schools do not lack financially, yet, as Ms. Thorne knows, nothing is further from the truth. She recently came to me to ask for suggestions in arranging financial support for several of her debate team members and their families, who were experiencing difficult financial times. She wanted to make sure they had the basic necessities, and also that the students were not excluded from Debate Club activities because of lack of financial resources. She skillfully arranged for support for these families, without causing unwanted or embarrassing attention to the families' situations.

Jamie Thorne is a leader on the Lakehill campus and in the educational community. She is valued and admired by her students, their families, her peers and co-workers, and those in the community with whom she actively engages. I can think of no one more deserving of this award.

## 2013 Teacher of the Year Awards

Elizabeth Dry – Alex Sanger Elementary School

Juli Powers – Gaston Middle School

Amy Solorio – Bryan Adams High School

Rochelle Rasheed – Lakehill Preparatory School

Juli Ann Riggs - Lakehill Preparatory School

Andy Zihlman – Bishop Lynch High School



Winners – Amy Solorio, Andy Zihlman, Rochelle Rasheed, Julie Ann Riggs, Juli Powers, Elizabeth Dry

Nominees: Lucy Ford, Alex Sanger Elementary School; Leslie Ginger – Alex; Sanger Elementary School; Ginny Simank, Dallas Academy; Rochelle Rasheed, Lakehill Preparatory School; Victoria John, Lakehill Preparatory School; Kristen Munoz, Lakehill Preparatory School; Elizabeth Schmitt, Lakehill Preparatory School; Jill Hennegan, Dallas Academy; Beth Barau, Bishop Lynch High School; Bill Dunklau, Lakehill Preparatory School; Dr. Martina Kroll, Lakehill Preparatory School; Susan Rappaport, Lakehill Preparatory School; Jamie Thorne, Lakehill Preparatory School; Jennifer Warder, Lakehill Preparatory School.

## **In the Public School Division:**

### **High School**

This teacher is described as an exceptional teacher and leader who continually sets an example as a role model to students, faculty, and community members. As the dance teacher and drill team instructor, her classes – which are always full - are known to be lively and engaging. Her students gain much more than the perfect dance step; they benefit daily from her high expectations, developing valuable character traits and learning to always strive for excellence.

Despite the additional responsibilities of also serving as Athletic Director, this nominee exhibits excellence in all facets of her job. Whether during a daily lesson or at a football game on a Friday night, this educator portrays, as do her students, the definition of excellence. Her strength lies in her ability to communicate well with her students both in and out of the classroom. She sets high goals for her students, holds them accountable for their actions, and rewards them for their successes. Because of her boundless energy and relentless efforts to provide quality education for all students, the Chamber is proud to recognize **Amy Solorio** from **Bryan Adams High School**.

### **Middle School**

This outstanding educator is described as the kind of teacher every student needs to have at least once in their educational lifetime. As the Orchestra teacher, she has built her school's program from the ground up, growing a program of 15 students into one that now serves more than 120. And it's no surprise that her programs keep growing: she makes learning to play music fun, helping students realize that it is not just about talent, but also about desire. During class, she models lessons by playing pieces with her students and works tirelessly to help individual students prepare for competitions and performances. An accomplished musician herself, she has opened doors for her students that would have otherwise not been possible. Because of her dedication to offering a well-rounded education to her middle school students, the Greater East Dallas Chamber is proud to recognize **Juli Powers** from **W.H. Gaston Middle School**.

### **Elementary School**

This nominee gives her heart and soul to the children of east Dallas. She believes in finding that special seed in every child and nurturing it, to help them grow and realize their full potential. For more than three decades, this outstanding educator has dedicated herself to students as a classroom teacher, principal, and curriculum director. As a second grade teacher, she strives to deliver meaningful instruction to her students every day. An award-winning innovator, she is highly adept at reaching at-risk children and their families and empowering them to live their best lives. Her reach extends far beyond the classroom walls and into the community. As the founder of the Promise of Peace Garden, her vision and tireless dedication transformed a trash-ridden vacant lot into a neighborhood treasure that serves children and adults throughout our community. For serving as a true force of nature in our community, and for giving her students and their families the chance to thrive, the Greater East Dallas Chamber is proud to recognize **Elizabeth Dry** from **Alex Sanger Elementary School**.

## **In the Private School Division:**

### **High School:**

This well-liked and well-respected teacher has served his alma mater as a teacher, coach, administrator, and athletic director for more than 35 years. As the girls' basketball coach, he has brought together young women with a variety of family, socioeconomic, and academic backgrounds and helped them unite as a team, while empowering each of them to be her best. Under his guidance, the success of each student-athlete in the

classroom has become a priority, and everyone works together to help students rise their full potential. Any student who sits in his classroom, plays ball on his court, or encounters him in the hallways at school, is certain to gain something from his teaching by example. For his dedication to his students and their success, both on the court and in the classroom, we recognize **Andy Zihlman** from **Bishop Lynch High School**.

#### **Middle School:**

Although she has been teaching for nearly 30 years, this educator is not one to rest on her laurels; in fact, she is on an endless quest to discover new and exciting ways to engage her middle school English students. Whether she is designing “top secret dossiers” to help her fifth graders complete a collaborative mystery project, or exploring the concept of gamification as a motivational technique in her classroom, she is constantly looking for ways to make her teaching even more effective. If there is a practice, a presentation, or a person who can make her students feel more engaged and valued, she will find a way to connect it to her classroom. Outside the classroom, she has penned more than 20 original plays for her drama club participants, each carefully crafted to highlight the talents and interests of the students who will perform them. Her own involvement in her community has enabled her to model positive community engagement to her students and has motivated them to serve others with their own hands and hearts. This inspiring, master educator has dedicated her career to improving the lives of her students. The Chamber is proud to recognize, from **Lakehill Preparatory School...Julie Ann Riggs**.

#### **Elementary School:**

This teacher is described as an outstanding educator who is an expert at meeting students where they are and encouraging them to achieve the next step, no matter how challenging. During her 15-year career in education, she has developed techniques and age-appropriate lessons to help her students thrive. As a third grade teacher, she instills in her students the belief that they can do anything through hard work and perseverance. A self-declared lifelong learner, she constantly strives to become a better teacher by learning new skills and strengthening her knowledge. She is an educational leader among the lower school faculty, yet still finds time to serve as an active participant in her neighborhood, where she regularly volunteers to help those in need and provides free tutoring to children in her community. In all of her endeavors, she works tirelessly with children and their parents, sharing tools that they need to realize success in school and in life. Cooperation, compassion, tolerance, and understanding are characteristics she models for her students daily. For her dedication to her students and their success, we recognize **Rochelle Rasheed** from **Lakehill Preparatory School**.

## 2012 Teacher of the Year Awards

Victor Chacon - L. L. Hotchkiss Elementary  
Patricia Fugate - Gaston Middle School  
Tom Crabb - Woodrow Wilson High School  
Kim Toulouse - Dallas Academy  
Kevin Jennings, Lakehill Preparatory School  
John Trout, Lakehill Preparatory School



Chamber Chairman Roger Perry; Patricia Fugate, Gaston Middle School; Tom Crabb, Woodrow Wilson High School; Kim Toulouse, Dallas Academy; John Trout – Lakehill Preparatory School; Kevin Jennings, Lakehill Preparatory School; Victor Chacon, L. L. Hotchkiss Elementary; James Weber, Comerica Bank.

Nominees: Tom Crabb, Woodrow Wilson High School; Patricia Fugate, Gaston Middle School; Victor Chacon, L. L. Hotchkiss; Vivian Pando, Alex Sanger; Elizabeth Dry, Alex Sanger; Kit Sawyer, Bishop Lynch; Kim Toulouse, Dallas Academy; Bill Dunklau, Lakehill Preparatory School, Katie Becker, Lakehill Preparatory School, Kevin Jennings, Lakehill Preparatory School, Julie Riggs, Lakehill Preparatory School; Victoria John, Lakehill Preparatory School; Rochelle Rasheed, Lakehill Preparatory School ; John Trout, Lakehill Preparatory School.

## **In the Private School Division:**

### **High School:**

This teacher has taught math at her school for 29 years and is now the head of the Math Department. The Yearbook she began in 1983 has since earned a first place ranking with the National Scholastic Press Association as one of the finest yearbooks in the country. She has addressed the needs of a unique student population and has motivated her students to reach for their personal best. Her hard work continues to payoff, as she watches her students earn college degrees and become successful in a variety of fields, including business, education, and medicine. She has served as the sponsor of a variety of campus clubs and organizations, including Student Council and the Math Club. Her involvement in her community has enabled her to model positive community engagement to her students and has motivated them to become active as well. This inspiring, master educator has dedicated her career to improving the lives of her students. The Chamber is proud to recognize, from **Dallas Academy...Kim Toulouse.**

### **Middle School:**

This teacher is described as a leader who motivates others to strive for excellence. As a Middle School English teacher, he demonstrates instructional creativity and innovation by making learning interesting for all of the students in his class. When diagraming sentences, for example, he uses funny and unusual sentences that keep the students' attention. His goal is to make sure that all students understand the material and can apply it. As a class sponsor, he is instrumental in helping his students identify needs in the community. He believes that service to others is an important part of a student's life and makes sure that students know how to get involved and affect change. He stays current on a variety of topics, and serves as a role model to his students, showing them that learning continues throughout life. As a coach, he helps his students stretch themselves to reach their personal best. We are pleased to recognize **Kevin Jennings** from **Lakehill Preparatory School.**

### **Elementary School:**

This teacher is described as an outstanding educator who demonstrates expertise, creativity, and innovation in his teaching. During his career in education, he has developed techniques and age-appropriate lessons to help his students thrive. As a fourth grade teacher~ he encourages his students to ask questions, and employs a variety of tactics to inspire kids to ask the best questions they can. A self-declared lifelong learner, this educator doesn't stop when the bell rings. He is a Cub Scout leader, the Director of the Summer Camps program, and the sponsor of a popular campus club. In all of his endeavors, he seems to most enjoy helping kids gain confidence by trying something new. Every situation provides a "teaching moment" for this educator, and sometimes the non-academic lessons he imparts are the most profound. Cooperation, compassion, tolerance, and understanding are characteristics he models for his students daily. For his dedication to his students and their success, we recognize **John Trout** from **Lakehill Preparatory School.**

## 2011 Teacher of the Year Awards

Margaret Sorrells – Stonewall Jackson Elementary School

Susan Clegg - Stonewall Jackson Elementary School

Mary Ann Trapalis - Stonewall Jackson Elementary School

Brooke Varner – Woodrow Wilson High School

Lou Wilkin – Lakehill Preparatory School

Bryna Thomson - Lakehill Preparatory School

Bettye Davis – Dallas Academy

### 2011 Winners

#### In the Public School Division:

##### High School

This teacher is described as a teacher who is good at her craft and wants to be better. She is a dedicated science teacher who works to bring the latest science and technology instruction to all of her students. She works tirelessly to ensure that her students have high quality, engaging lessons and to make sure that all students succeed. And her students do succeed, as she appeals to a variety of different learning styles. Her efforts do not end when school lets out. Two evenings a week, she can be found visiting the homes of at-risk students, making sure their education continues. This teacher is involved in many school activities and serves as a mentor to other teachers on her campus. In addition to academic excellence, she finds ways to encourage her students to be committed to their community through the Unity Project, a program which helps to develop empathy and understanding within the school. The Chamber is pleased to recognize **Brook Varner** from **Woodrow Wilson High School**.

##### Elementary/Middle School

This cohesive team works to bring a unique and culturally diverse experience to the entire fifth grade. These outstanding individuals not only prepare their students for the fifth grade, but for the rest of their lives. As a team, these teachers have enriched the lives of all of their students by utilizing strong programs for their self-maintained deaf students and their mainstream students alike. Expectations are high and everyone can and does learn. With more than 70 years of combined experience, this dynamic team has left their mark on generations of students fortunate enough to be in their classrooms. Each of them is an active leader on campus, serving as role models and mentors to their peers and involving themselves in every area of campus and community life. Because of their relentless efforts to provide quality education for all students, the Greater East Dallas Chamber is proud to recognize **Mary Ann Trapalis, Susan Clegg, and Margaret Sorrells** from **Stonewall Jackson Elementary School**.

#### In the Private School Division:

##### Elementary School:

This teacher is described as an outstanding educator who demonstrates expertise, creativity, and innovation in her teaching. During her 24-year career in education, she has developed techniques and age-appropriate



lessons to help her elementary students thrive when learning Spanish. She imparts a love of the Spanish language, history, and culture that is clearly visible in the eagerness of her students. She continually strives for newer and better methods to improve her students' learning, and readily uses songs, stories, dialogs, and holiday celebrations to enhance her lessons. Because of these experiences, students in her classes truly become citizens of the world, fully experiencing the joy and meaning of different cultures through a variety of experiences, all rooted in the beauty of the Spanish language. For her dedication to her students and their success, we recognize **Lou Wilkin** from **Lakehill Preparatory School**.

**Middle School:**

This teacher is described as a leader who motivates others to strive for excellence. As a result of her extensive training and expertise, instructors from around the community frequently spend time in her classroom, observing her teaching methods and style, as well as her incorporation of the latest technologies. As a Middle School science teacher, she imparts a love of science and discovery that is measurably reflected in the success of her students. Students in her classroom eagerly anticipate a variety of interesting projects, including squid dissections, egg drop experiments, and the construction of DNA models. Her students leave her classroom with a wealth of knowledge about science, ready to take on the most challenging high school courses. Her dedication to and involvement in her community has enabled her to model positive community engagement to her students and has motivated them to become active as well. We are pleased to recognize **Bryna Thomson** from **Lakehill Preparatory School**.

**High School:**

This teacher has worked with hundreds of students during her career, each of them with their own learning styles, academic needs, and learning problems. Her patience, empathy, and dedication has allowed each of them to overcome adversity. This amazing individual began her journey in 1967 with the then-fledgling Dallas Academy, and has continued her dedication to the school over the past 45 years, addressing the needs of a unique student population. Over the years she has pioneered numerous learning methods specifically designed for learning different students. Thankfully she missed the fast-paced school environment and her retirement in 1992 was short-lived. Today she continues to fill an extremely important role at Dallas Academy, working to restore academic promise to students who have fallen behind in other educational settings. Her lessons clearly have a lasting impact on every student she teaches. This inspiring, master educator has dedicated her career to changing the lives of children with special needs. The Chamber is proud to recognize, from **Dallas Academy...Bettye Davis**.

# 2010 Teacher of the Year Awards

Sandra Byer – Hexter Elementary School  
Mark Painter – Stonewall Jackson Elementary School  
Louis Benevides – Woodrow Wilson High School  
Mylana Burt – Lakehill Preparatory School  
Molly Grogan – Dallas Academy  
Evan Matthews - Lakehill Preparatory School

## **In the Public School Division: Elementary/Middle School**

This individual is an active leader on her campus, serving as a role model and mentor to her peers and establishing a true Professional learning community where teachers from every grade level come together to improve teaching and learning. Her classroom was designated a “model classroom” and has been shared with other teachers throughout the district. This educator’s priority is clearly her students’ learning and she is known for her whatever it takes attitude. As a fifth grade science teacher devoted to discovery learning, she incorporates a variety of exciting, hands-on experiments to engage and enlighten her students. While her students’ performance on TAKS is impressive, her real impact is seen in the love her students have developed for science and the fact that they proudly see themselves as real scientists. Because of her relentless efforts to provide quality education for all students, the Greater East Dallas Chamber is proud to recognize **Sandra Byer** from **Hexter Elementary School**.

## **Elementary/Middle School**

This teacher has played a unique role in the lives of students at his elementary school for more than a decade. A well known educational leader in east Dallas and beyond, he reaches out to the community and readily shares his successes with other educators. As the program leader and instructor in the Outdoor Science Lab, this teacher has established a unique outdoor, hands-on, multisensory science program that is beloved part of this neighborhood school and a widely-admired model in the educational community. The small plot of beans he planted in 1996 to help second graders understand the life cycle of plants now encompasses 20,000 square feet with nearly 600 plants, as well as a wildscape, chicken coop, composting area, pond, and greenhouse. The creative vision and tireless devotion of this outstanding educator has developed the Stonewall Garden into one of the premier school gardens in the region, and has enhanced the lives of countless students along the way. From **Stonewall Jackson Elementary School**, we are pleased to recognize **Mark Painter**.

## **High School**

This teacher is described as a highly motivated, caring teacher who is always trying to develop new ways to reach struggling students. He engages his students and helps them develop the skills necessary to succeed after high school. Parents applaud his work ethic and dedication to his profession and praise the impact he has on their children. Students of all skill levels have benefited from his patient instruction. This teacher helps his students think about the outside world, understand the difference between a job and a career, and visualize careers beyond high school. He is an inspiring English III teacher who takes his role beyond the classroom to actively engage in the community through the PTA. The Chamber is pleased to recognize **Louis Benevides** from **Woodrow Wilson High School**.

## **In the Private School Division:**

### **Elementary School:**

This teacher is described by a parent as the kindergarten teacher every parent dreams of having for their child. She continually strives for newer and better methods to improve her students' learning, and readily uses songs, movement, and visual imagery to teach her lessons. Her passion for self improvement, her creative nature for lesson planning, and her desire to help all children succeed are her guiding principals. She has created a wonderful learning environment for children of all backgrounds in her classroom and is able to make each child realize his or her own strengths and make each one feel unique and special. A colleague says, "She loves everything about teaching, her students, and her school and creates an air of excitement around everything she does." For her dedication to her students and their success, we recognize **Mylana Burt** from **Lakehill Preparatory School**.

### **Middle School:**

This teacher has consistently provided dedicated service to address the needs of a unique student population. Through the medium of music, this educator works to develop social, emotional, academic, and performing arts skills in students with learning differences and developmental disorders. Her choir group performs in a variety of venues throughout the community and she has created both a girls' Glee Club and a performing arts club to empower her students. The benefits of her program are numerous, allowing students to gain confidence, learn social skills, feel connected, and develop pride in their school and in themselves. With over 25 years of experience as a Music Therapist and Choir teacher, this master educator has literally changed the lives of children with special needs. The Chamber is proud to recognize, from **Dallas Academy...Molly Grogan**.

### **High School:**

This teacher is described as a born teacher who is able to engage students of all learning styles and needs through exceptional expertise and solid teaching. Through his curriculum, he takes his students on an incredible journey, offering a dynamic perspective to a diverse population. As an English teacher, he imparts a love of literature and the written word that is measurably reflected in the success of his students. His students leave his classroom filled with a wealth of knowledge of classic literature, feeling confident that they are prepared to take the most challenging of college courses. His nominator describes him as an educator among educators. His love of learning and teaching is as infectious as his wonderful sense of humor and joy of laughter. He makes his students and colleagues want to share in his pure enjoyment of learning. We are pleased to recognize **Evan Matthews** from **Lakehill Preparatory School**.

## **In the Public School Division:**

### **High School**

Although this teacher didn't start out planning to be a high school teacher, he is described as one of the best. He is now in his third career at his beloved alma mater, where for twelve years he has taken on the children of East Dallas as a loving guide, coach, and teacher. This teacher is involved in many school activities and puts in many hours to help with alumni events and to serve as halftime announcer at his school's football games. He was also a moving force in the recent redesign of the school. As a teacher in the Business, Entrepreneurship, and Finance Academy, his students have been extremely successful in local, state, and national competitions. As a golf coach, he has led ms team to numerous victories. A true representative of East Dallas, the chamber is proud to recognize **Tom Crabb from Woodrow Wilson High School.**

### **Middle School**

This nominee uses her talents and strengths to promote academic excellence, unity, leadership, and service to others. Although she has been teaching for 36 years, those who know her say she shows no signs of slowing down. In fact, her administrators say that she teaches eight classes a day--even though there are only seven on the schedule. An outstanding communicator, she maintains contact with parents, tutors five days a week, and is the biggest cheerleader at athletic events for her students. She frequently helps with band and orchestra concerts and competitions, even though she is not the sponsor. She is described as one who will serve wherever she is needed and always works for the good of the team. Because of her boundless energy and relentless efforts to provide quality education for all students, the Greater East Dallas Chamber is proud to recognize **Patricia Fugate from W.H. Gaston Middle School.**

### **Elementary School**

This nominee does much more than teach his students English, science, social studies, and math during the day. In fact, it is his "above and beyond" commitment that stands out to those who know him. The majority of the students in this teacher's class come from refugee camps in Asia, Iraq, and Africa. Most of them do not know English, and almost none of them have had access to electricity or plumbing, much less formal education. This year, there are seven different languages represented in his class. In the course of a year, this amazing educator uses his passion for teaching to help mold and encourage these students so that they know English, they know the American experience, and they develop a love of learning. For giving his students a fighting chance, not just to survive but to succeed, the Greater East Dallas Chamber is proud to recognize **Victor Chacon-Carrasco from L. L. Hotchkiss Elementary Middle School.**