



DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS AWARDS
Celebrating Excellence

THE DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS
AWARDS CEREMONY



TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2017

4:00 - 5:30 P.M.

GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS AWARDS

The Distinguished Teachers Awards Committee, Inc. is a nonprofit organization established to recognize and celebrate excellence among the dedicated teaching staff of the Greenwich Public Schools. The Distinguished Teachers Awards Committee has worked on the selection process for this year's recipients for the last eight months. The committee selects the Distinguished Teacher recipients from nominations made by colleagues, administrators, parents, students and/or community members. The committee reviews the nominations and selects a maximum of six Distinguished Teachers based on the criteria outlined in the Nomination Packet. To be eligible, a nominee must be a full-time Greenwich Public Schools staff member who is a certified teacher. A nominee must have completed at least five years of teaching, three of them in Greenwich. The criteria for identifying a distinguished teacher include, among others, that he/she inspires enthusiasm for learning and academic excellence, elicits a high level of achievement from students in relation to their individual abilities, encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and demonstrates and continues to pursue a high mastery of subject matter and best practices for instruction. The six teachers selected this year personify the criteria of a Distinguished Teacher.

PROGRAM

WELCOME

Chris Winters

Headmaster, Greenwich High School

MUSICAL SELECTION

Performed by Greenwich High School Percussion Ensemble

Directed by Ben Walker

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION AND MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Barbara Oppedisano

Chair, Distinguished Teachers Awards Committee

COMMENTS

Salvatore J. Corda

Interim Superintendent of Schools

COMMENTS

Peter Tesei

First Selectman of Greenwich

PRESENTATION OF 2017 DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS

Nominators of Recipients

COMMENTS

Scott Frantz

State Senator

CLOSING COMMENTS

Peter Sherr

Chair, Board of Education

*Please join the Distinguished Teachers in the Galleria
after the ceremony for a reception in their honor.*

2016-2017
DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS AWARDS
COMMITTEE

Barbara Oppedisano, *Chair, Community*
Cynthia Sherwin*, *Vice-Chair, Community*
Judy Wren*, *Secretary, Community*
Rosemary Thibeault, *Treasurer, Community*

Debbie Appelbaum, *BOE*
Elinor Carr*, *Community*
Trudi Durrell, *GOSA*
Del Eberhardt, *Community*
Christine Edwards, *Community - Kiwanis*
Cindy Lyall, *PTAC*
Victoria Newman, *Community*
Anne Pfetsch, *Community*
Charill Pierce, *GEA*
Lauren Rabin, *BOE*
Angela Schmidt, *GOSA*
Blakely Stinebaugh, *Community - Alliance*
Janet Stroble*, *Community*
Carol Sutton*, *GEA*
John Whalen*, *Community*

Kim Eves, *Ex-Officio*

* Previous Recipients of the Distinguished Teachers Award

DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS 2017

STEPHEN BABYAK

Cos Cob School

Grade 5

VICTORIA MORRISON CAPPALI

North Street School

Kindergarten

MICHAEL GALATIOTO

Greenwich High School

History/Psychology

ERIN RANDALL

Greenwich High School

Special Education

BRIDGET SUVANSRI

Eastern Middle School

Language Arts

DIANE TAYLOR

North Mianus School

Special Education

NOMINATORS OF RECIPIENTS

DANIELLE MANION

NOMINATED STEPHEN BABYAK

JENNIFER BEHETTE

NOMINATED VICTORIA MORRISON CAPPALI

SHEILA GALLAGHER

NOMINATED MICHAEL GALATIOTO

VIRGINIA PLATH-KELLY

NOMINATED ERIN RANDALL

CATHERINE O'BRIEN AND PATRICK O'BRIEN

NOMINATED BRIDGET SUVANSRI

AUDRA O'DONOVAN

NOMINATED DIANE TAYLOR



STEPHEN BABYAK

COS COB SCHOOL GRADE 5

Stephen Babyak has taught in Greenwich for 15 years, and has long-standing ties to Cos Cob Elementary School as a student, parent, and now as a teacher of 14 years there. He is a man of many talents and he offers them freely to the Cos Cob School community- cooking at May Fair, creating games for Fall Festival, designing the school mascot and designing sets for the fifth grade play, running games at Math Night. No matter the event, he can be counted on for full-scale participation.

He is an early adopter of many technology supports for learning and enthusiastically shares what he has learned with colleagues. He is a visible and vocal supporter of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) learning, but there are many other elements important in his teaching. Mr. Babyak's principal Gene Schmidt writes, "Mr. Babyak constantly models and fosters in his students the four Cs- super skills students need for 21st Century learning: Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity."

Last school year, Cos Cob School launched the Innovation Space and Reimagining Library Learning Commons. Mr. Babyak had attended a two-year "Re-imagining the Library Learning Commons" program at Cooperative Educational Services in Trumbull and also researched ways he could reimagine current units of study to incorporate new ideas and technologies. He learned how to take lessons of the past and bring them into our future, calling for children to be actively engaged in researching, learning, designing, and sharing their knowledge.

Cos Cob School's Media Specialist Nancy Schwartz writes of Mr. Babyak's involvement and impact, "Stephen immediately recognized the importance of an Innovation Space and how it neatly fits into the District's focus on personalized learning. He became the very first teacher to fully embrace the space when his students designed, created, and demonstrated instruments for the grade 5 Sound and Light unit. Since that first foray into the Innovation Space, he has worked with me and on his own to make learning exciting and relevant for his students there." He has also brought colleagues into

the space to help them “play” with the materials and learn ways to integrate the ideas into their teaching.

A collaborator on behalf of his students, Mr. Babyak has participated in co-teaching with special education colleagues to address the needs of all his students. He praises the contributions of his grade level colleagues as they meet daily to plan, share, reflect, and capitalize on each other’s successful efforts. He represents his colleagues in a variety of capacities including as the school’s representative on the Superintendent’s Teacher Advisory Committee, as the teacher liaison to the GEA for nine years, and as the teacher liaison on the Cos Cob School PTA Executive Board.

Mr. Babyak connects with his students through sharing personal experiences. He works to understand the strengths, challenges, and motivations of each student and to make learning fun. He is the kind of teacher who had a student tell his mother, “Who needs snow days when you got Mr. B, he’s way more fun than a snow day.” When his mother asked why, he replied, “He just gets me.” As Mr. Babyak puts it, “Our job is to understand, sympathize, adjust, be flexible, and to ‘get’ every single child that walks through your door.” He works to find ways to help everyone succeed, stating, “My most rewarding experiences are when my kids jump that hurdle, understand why, come to terms with or overcome what’s been standing in their way and advocate for themselves.”

Reflecting on the impact Mr. Babyak had on her two sons, who are very different students, parent nominator Danielle Manion writes, “We have been impressed by, and grateful for, his deeply personal and caring approach and are nominating him now because we feel we can speak to his gift for teaching students in the present and also to how ably he prepares them for the future.” Mrs. Manion reports, “I speak for the entire Cos Cob School community when I say he is the pride of Cos Cob and a staunch supporter of the Greenwich Public Schools system. He is passionate about the town because he grew up here, went to the school he teaches in. He is a self-charging battery of innovation, creativity and sensitivity that empowers generations of students.”





VICTORIA MORRISON CAPPIALI

NORTH STREET SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN

Victoria Morrison Cappiali has taught for 25 years, including three years as a preschool teacher and two years as a second grade teacher, but the bulk of her career, and her passion, has been teaching Kindergarten, something she has done for 19 of her 21 years at North Street School.

“Kindergartners vary greatly in their age and maturity levels,” states Mrs. Cappiali. “Their experiences in life are vast and varied, and it is my job to know each one thoroughly. From the first days of school as they enter my classroom, I begin to get a sense of who they are personally, what drives their spirit, and what motivates each one of them to learn. I speak with them, observe their behaviors, taken anecdotal notes, make phone calls to parents, review their cumulative files and read reports from the preschools. I notice how they act, react, engage or withdraw.”

North Street School Principal, Jill Flood writes, “ Educating children is Vikki’s passion and she radiates joy and enthusiasm every day. Her love of teaching and learning permeates her classroom and inspires each student to give it his/her all and to be the best student he/she can be.” When one visits K-Capialli, they will see busy, productive students, feel warmth and happiness and “know this is what kindergarten is supposed to be like!”

Parents note that she uses lively and engaging techniques like singing and theatrical gestures. Her enthusiasm and creativity captures her students’ attention and makes them want to learn more. Students and parents “have a deep, enduring affection and respect for her.” And further, “Mrs. Cappiali’s communication with parents is frequent, relevant, and often humorous. She welcomes us with open arms to participate in her classroom. She provides transparency so parents can see, feel, and understand their child’s world.”

According to Principal Flood, Mrs. Cappiali does a terrific job of helping students understand that being done quickly is not the goal, the goal is to take your time and do your best work, showcasing all that you know. Meeting with each child to set goals is a strategy that she uses to help her students understand their role in their own success and the fact that it is their choice to practice and put in the

work it takes to meet their goals. Mrs. Cappiali is able to provide the appropriate supports each student needs in order for them to become more independent and more confident at their own pace. “Her ability to know and understand the needs of each of her children on such a personal level is one of the qualities that make her truly gifted at what she does,” states Flood.

A colleague writes, “When one enters Mrs. Cappiali’s classroom, one enters a realm of happy purposeful activity. Vikki fosters a community of five- and six-year-old problem solvers- and she makes it look effortless.”

Always willing to collaborate on best practices and help with anything that comes her way, Mrs. Cappiali’s collaboration efforts extend to her students as they pair with a third grade class for reading buddies or partner with fifth grade technology buddies. She reports, “The rapport they build and relationships they cultivate carry over in the hallways, on the playground, during assemblies and on the bus. It’s so important to teach children how to care for others, be respectful, helpful and dedicated.”

Mrs. Cappiali shares her knowledge and expertise across many forums, particularly with parents of incoming kindergarten students and with preschool programs. She practices what she preaches about understanding the expectations for the grade levels above and below those she teaches. Mrs. Cappiali has also mentored new teachers and student teachers.

She contributes to North Street School outside of the classroom in many ways. Mrs. Cappiali is one of the teachers selected to participate in The Academy for Teacher Leadership at Cooperative Educational Services, helps organize or participates in Math Night, Read to a Dog, and Family Night at the Book Fair. She has even taken her turn in the dunk tank on Field Day.

Beyond her work at school, Mrs. Cappiali is a dedicated volunteer with the Junior League of Greenwich and since 2005 with a Board of Education group of volunteers who cook and serve a monthly meal at Pacific House Homeless Shelter for Men. A colleague reported that she inspires the staff to “look beyond the classroom and work toward the common good of our school’s community.” A parent summarizes, “Vikki is a go getter who doesn’t wait for things to happen, she makes things happen.”





MICHAEL GALATIOTO

GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY/PSYCHOLOGY

Michael Galatioto is described by his administrator as “an outstanding educator who inspires enthusiasm in ALL students, through his compassion for kids, contagious positive energy, and excitement for the material.” He is a passionate historian who encourages students to take an active role in their own learning and he models that active learning in his own impressive professional development. The word “encourages” comes up often from Mike and those who talk about his work. What is extraordinary is that what he encourages happens!

Mr. Galatioto has taught for 12 years, all of them at Greenwich High School in the social studies department, working with a diverse array of learners, across a collection of classes: United States History, AP United States Government, AP Comparative Government Politics, Contemporary America, Seminar Skills, AP Psychology, Civics in Contemporary America, and Introduction to Psychology. He has worked over the last ten summers with the Gilder Lehrman Institute in New York to develop mastery of his subject matter, taking and teaching courses with professors who are expert on a specific historical topic. Mr. Galatioto also has a talent and interest in integrating best practices for teaching his subject matter with the Common Core, the Vision of the Graduate, and the Connecticut Social Studies Framework.

“I have found that the best activities are ones that ask students to first formulate a question or point of inquiry. This allows them to be detectives in their own learning and allows them the rewards that come with personal discoveries,” states Mr. Galatioto. He described tracking down original letters through an archivist at Oxford or the Kennedy Museum, explaining how he obtained them so his students would see that no source or piece of information is out of one’s reach if a person is willing to put in some effort to obtain it.

He believes, “students should have a strong command of content knowledge and understand ‘what is already known.’ But beyond that, it is even more important for them to be able to synthesize that information and find where the content is relevant and applicable to their own lives.” Although information is readily available, Mr. Galatioto says his job is to encourage his students “to

be distinguishing critics of knowledge.” His department’s goal this year is “analyzing and constructing arguments based on evidence.” He is said to “adeptly use inquiry method to continually encourage his students to support their responses with information from the sources.”

Mr. Galatioto has won awards for his historical research and has served on the Greenwich Historical Society Education Board. He writes and delivers the Fourth of July Address each year for the Town of Greenwich at its annual Town Hall celebration.

His nominator, parent Sheila Gallagher states, he “has been THE most inspiring and engaging educator any of my daughters have encountered to date at Greenwich HS” and “he instills a very special desire in my girls to WANT to learn and be prepared for class.” He “inspires curiosity and excitement about the subject matter and the kids look forward to going to his class and being engaged from the moment they step over the threshold.” He communicates frequently with parents, not only sharing concerns, but happy news about a student’s excellent grade earned, remarkable observation, or act of kindness to another classmate.

Colleague Karen Boyea writes about walking through the Student Center with Mr. Galatioto; “I feel like I am walking with a celebrity! From every corner, I hear students yelling out, ‘Mr. G!’ Michael has a rare ability to connect with students of all ability levels. Mike is always the teacher I recommend new teachers observe and meet with to discuss American History 212. Michael brings humor, integrity, insight, and leadership to everything he does.”

Bella House Administrator Lucy Arecco relates some of the substantial contributions Mr. Galatioto has made to improve his department, school and the District beyond the classroom: he co-chaired the three-year revision of the American History curriculum, he has taken on a social studies program associate role, he organized the school-wide presidential mock election, he co-chaired the school’s Ethics Committee and plans an annual Ethics Day for GHS, and he co-chaired the New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation steering committee that revised and rewrote the mission statement for the school. He has served as an advisor for numerous GHS activities, including Youth Equipment Sharing, Hand in Hand, Model United Nations, and more.

Michael Galatioto loves the study of history and inspires his students to feel the same.





ERIN RANDALL

GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION

Erin Randall is in her tenth year of teaching and eighth year as a special education teacher at Greenwich High School who concentrates on literacy. Working with students who have moderate to severe cognitive, social and/or emotional disabilities who have varying ranges of reading levels and reading challenges, she goes to great lengths on their behalf, both inside the classroom and beyond. Her nominator, colleague Virginia Plath-Kelly writes, “Erin does not see a student’s disability; rather she sees a student’s potential. Erin gets to know her students and finds different strategies to inspire their learning and keep them engaged during lessons.”

Clearly, Ms. Randall has the desire to help develop her students’ reading abilities, but she has put great personal effort into developing her skills to ensure this happens. She has sought out training in the most well researched, specialized reading programs and methodologies. To gain Associate Level Orton-Gillingham certification, Ms. Randall completed a 100-hour practicum and 60 hours of intensive coursework that included an extensive introduction to phonology, structure of English, characteristics of dyslexia, multisensory teaching and assessments. She has learned to use digital resources to support literacy. Having all of those powerful tools at her disposal is extraordinary, but Ms. Randall knows that these teaching techniques are only part of what is needed. She has also learned about young adult literature. She stays knowledgeable and current in what young adults WANT to read, finding high interest materials. Ms. Randall gives her students the skill to read and encourages their desire to read.

She applies the same dedicated effort to her student’s emotional and social development. A parent seconder writes of the experience for her child, sharing that “after a few months (working) with Erin, with the encouragement and discipline and high expectations she has for all her charges, he was participating eagerly in her class and his abilities just kept growing. He was motivated to do anything Ms. Randall asked of him, and she ASKED. She pushed him out of his comfort zone while acknowledging his need for control and structure. She encouraged his independence.”

Ms. Randall also conducts formal and informal reading evaluations to make informed contributions to a student's program. She collaborates with other teaching staff to implement the best possible program, monitors students' growth and encourages students to take ownership of their own learning.

Clearly, Ms. Randall represents a powerful force for academic skills development, but that represents only a part of her contribution to her students and the school. She is also an active agent for positive development outside of the classroom. One of her most rewarding experiences as a teacher has come through her development of the Unified Sports program at Greenwich High School. She describes it as "a registered program of Special Olympics that combines students with and without intellectual disabilities, or a closely related developmental disability, to train and compete in athletic events. My program embodies a multitude of abilities and personalities that when formed together create a stunning canvas of positivity and symmetry." Ms. Randall is a good fit for this endeavor, combining her knowledgeable about and experience in working with students who have disabilities with her experience having coached the GHS Girls' Junior Varsity Volleyball program from 2009-2015. Over the past seven years Unified Sports at GHS has been recognized by the Greenwich Board of Education and was recently recognized as a Champion Banner school, a national award presented by Special Olympics International.

Since 2014, Ms. Randall has served as adviser to Hand in Hand Club, a group that socially integrates students with and without disabilities through recreational activities. She explains that, "social barriers have been broken and friendships among the most diverse individuals have bloomed. Some non-disabled participants have stated they plan on pursuing a career in special education as well as furthering their involvement after high school due to the relationships they have built with their peers with disabilities."

Erin Randall is a knowledgeable, hard-working, caring teacher who willingly shares her expertise not only with students, but also with colleagues, parents, and in the community. "When students know they are valued, respected, and held to high expectations, internal motivation will propel them toward triumph, whatever form that victory may be," states Ms. Randall. "My mission as an educator is to ignite that faith and confidence within them."





BRIDGET SUVANSRI

EASTERN MIDDLE SCHOOL LANGUAGE ARTS

Bridget Suvansri has taught for 19 years, the past 15 years in Greenwich at Eastern Middle School where she teaches sixth grade Advanced Learning Program (ALP) English and Social Studies and seventh grade ALP Seminar. She was nominated by Catherine and Patrick O'Brien, two of her middle school students who wrote, "We are nominating Mrs. Suvansri because she has taught us how to soar academically; she elicits high level achievement from students and encourages us to move mountains. Her class is not easy-more like 'boot camp' for language arts-and for that we are grateful." "She understands all of our individual strengths and diligently works with us," they continued. "For some, she teaches the power of confidence in presenting, and for others, she focuses on listening skills. She provides all the support we need while stressing self-responsibility and applauding effort."

Mrs. Suvansri helps her students develop real world communication skills and put them to use in their daily lives. She empowers her students to communicate clearly, correctly, effectively and with purpose, by sometimes using clever strategies. Colleague, Laura Donnelly reports, "The first time I knew Bridget was an extraordinary teacher was 15 years ago when I saw her in the hall wearing a tall, conical hat with an attached veil and looking every inch a queen. When I asked one of her students to explain what was happening, he said, "That's Queen Suvansri and we are part of her Grammar Kingdom!"

WordMasters is a vocabulary competition based on completing analogies. When Mrs. Suvansri found that her students "needed more practice in connecting WordMaster words to real world situations, she "created a game called 'The Interrogator' where the goal was to ask and answer high level questions using the words." The results speak for themselves; her sixth grade teams have consistently ranked in the top teams in the country year after year.

While using fun and challenging activities, Mrs. Suvansri explains, it is important "to inspire enthusiasm in many real-world, relevant ways. If students see that their work matters or that it will have an impact beyond the moment in time, they will more deeply

engage in the exercise. I help my students see the value of self-assessment and goal setting as tools that allow them to achieve a high level of mastery on their own in the classroom and beyond.” “I have started to use global collaboration opportunities to extend multicultural literature so students can learn about places thousands of miles away that other kids call home.” Mrs. Suvansri has been a pioneer in global literature exchanges. She wrote and delivered two pilot programs for Global Literature exchanges with students in Pakistan, Jamaica, Kenya, Ghana, and Argentina. Those units are now being offered to teachers around the world. She published an article, “Creating Meaningful Global Connections” on Edutopia.

Mrs. Suvansri describes as one of her most rewarding teaching experiences, developing and implementing a 1:1 global literature course with a school in Pakistan. Her goal was for students, through a shared literature experience, to develop a better understanding of the world. Via shared video exchanges with students in Pakistan, her students explored themes such as cultural stereotypes, common misconceptions, leadership and role models, access to education, community service, and life in both Pakistan and the United States.

Mrs. Suvansri’s principal Mr. Ralph Mayo relates that she uses many creative instructional strategies to help her students reach mastery in each aspect of the Language Arts curriculum. He also credits her with helping students make a successful transition to middle school by encouraging them to join a club, go to intramurals, tryout for an athletic team, and advocate for themselves by meeting with their teachers before or after school. She helps them make strong connections to their school, but he reports, “The strongest connection that these children make is to Mrs. Suvansri, who demonstrates unbridled enthusiasm for her subject matter and the students in her class.” Parents applaud her communication with them and her work with students before and after school for support. Mrs. Suvansri is generous in sharing with colleagues and is known as a supreme collaborator through her work as Learning Facilitator for the Sixth Grade. She is a longtime member of the Technology Committee who has helped launched initiatives in the school and continues to experiment with new digital tools to improve her practice.

Her students write, “When a pebble is thrown into a vast lake, it makes a ripple in the water. Mrs. Suvansri has been the pebble that has as a result caused a change in our lives influencing us in many aspects.”





DIANE TAYLOR

NORTH MIANUS SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION

Parent nominator Audra O'Donovan writes of Diane Taylor—“Teaching is not a vocation for her, it’s a calling and I’ve seen firsthand the difference she can make.” It is not an accident that Mrs. Taylor makes this difference. She sought out professional development opportunities that give her many sophisticated, well-researched tools to help her students overcome challenges. But it is said of her, “She builds hope and confidence in students who feel that learning is out of their reach; she enables her students to pick themselves up and strive to succeed and support one another. For families who struggle with learning disabilities, Mrs. Taylor is a true miracle.”

Mrs. Taylor explains, “I consider myself exceptionally lucky to work with children that others cannot reach. I’ve always thought it something of a miracle to take a child who has not been able to learn to read and teach him or her to crack that code. It isn’t easy; it doesn’t happen without great effort on the child’s part, but it does happen.” Working with a child with severe communication difficulties, she emails about his day to his parents so they can talk with him about it. They report he loves coming to school and say, “We feel like we have hit the jackpot.”

Diane Taylor has taught for 26 years, the past 21 years in Greenwich at North Mianus School where she has worked as a special education teacher across all the grade levels kindergarten through fifth grade. Prior to coming to Greenwich she worked as a teacher and curriculum specialist in programs that focused on communication skills, problem solving, and behavioral issues in the states of Colorado, Washington, and Wisconsin where she was often selected to represent her district and share her knowledge on educating children with special needs.

A student explains, “I like Mrs. Taylor because she helps me learn and get better at things and be a better student. If I didn’t have Mrs. Taylor I wouldn’t be the person I am today.” Mrs. Taylor teaches what no textbook can accomplish: self-confidence.

According to a colleague, Mrs. Taylor works with a diverse group of students with specific academic, emotional, and social needs. She holds them to high expectations and helps them succeed. Students

report what they loved about Mrs. Taylor was her belief in them. One stated, “Mrs. Taylor gives us positive energy on everything, she never tells me I can’t do it. She keeps letting me try until I get it.”

Mrs. Taylor describes her work as unfolding the petals to reveal a “reader” with the child’s dedication and the teacher’s explicitly designed instruction. “Very often I am assigned difficult children-difficult in the sense that they are masters at work avoidance, whether it be waiting a teacher out or being so disruptive that work is never completed. It is very hard to reverse that habit, but not impossible. It just takes more careful planning, total consistency, and constant and realistic expectations. I set the bar high for these kids, but I present them with work I know they are capable of completing and little by little learning becomes its own reward.”

Notes a colleague, “some refer to teaching as a craft, and Diane Taylor is expert at hers.” She has sought out training in effective, well-researched strategies for teaching reading so that she can pinpoint a deficit a student has and know which strategy to try. She holds Orton-Gillingham Associate level certification to be able to help struggling readers. She is being trained in Pivotal Response Training, to support students on the Autism Spectrum. She has sought specialized training in math, reading, communication, and behavior. Mrs. Taylor has embraced the multifaceted aspect of her role and developed her skills to meet all sorts of student needs.

North Mianus School Assistant Principal, Kat Brunswick writes, “Parents have emailed me praising Diane’s efforts. Her frequent and detailed communication with these parents is greatly appreciated and she has done exemplary work developing strong home to school connections.” Ms. O’Donovan declares, “Mrs. Taylor also becomes our educator; providing knowledge, strategies, support and at times a shoulder to cry on to parents.”

Mrs. Taylor says successful teaching can present “the opportunity to change the world, one child at a time.” By all reports, Diane Taylor is changing the world, one child at a time by allowing her students to be the masters of their own future.



The Distinguished Teachers Awards Committee wishes to thank the following for their generous contributions:

GREENWICH EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (GEA)

GREENWICH ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS (GOSA)

KIWANIS CLUB OF GREENWICH

MEMBERS OF THE DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS AWARDS COMMITTEE

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GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL PTA

CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL PTA

EASTERN MIDDLE SCHOOL PTA

WESTERN MIDDLE SCHOOL PTA

COS COB SCHOOL PTA

GLENVILLE SCHOOL PTA

HAMILTON AVENUE SCHOOL PTA

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL AT DUNDEE PTA

JULIAN CURTISS SCHOOL PTA

NEW LEBANON SCHOOL PTA

NORTH MIANUS SCHOOL PTA

NORTH STREET SCHOOL PTA

OLD GREENWICH SCHOOL PTA

PARKWAY SCHOOL PTA

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL PTA

BARBARA O'NEILL (ADDED AFTER EVENT FOR 2018 INCLUSION)

Special thanks to DTAC Chair Barbara Oppedisano for the honoree profiles.

DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS 1985 - 2016

2016

Ana Chejin-Danielsen
Julie Cofone
Sarah Goldin
Sarah Harris
Jeannine Madoff
Ian Tiedemann

2015

Cathy Byrne
Richard Crawford
Luz Desrouilleres
Maryann Franchella
Maryann Jagodzinski
Diana Willie

2014

Mara Adelsberg
Cheryl Iozzo
Sheri McGowan
James M. Micik
Robert Walsh
Lin Yuan Young

2013

Cecilia Aita
Jennifer Benoit
Melissa Macchio Brown
Stephen Kinner
Esra Murray
Mary Beth Smith

2012

Christine Begole
Andrew Bramante
Richard Kurtzman
Elizabeth Manning
Barbara Brennan Oxer
Cynthia Sherwin

2011

Karen Boyea
Meredith Daniels
Laura Donnelly
Karen Foster
Nan Nelson
Jennifer Preli

2010

Alison Allerton
Jessica Baker
Rita Baker
Charill Pierce
Kathleen Steiner
Sheri Lyn Wollard

2009

Gretchen Crandall
Kathleen Harbort
Anne Haymon
Aaron Hull
Susan Tracey
Judith Wren

2008

Karen Anderson
Rita Clair
Camille Fusco
Arianne Haley-Banez
Christine Kovac
Anthony Mullen

2007

Phyllis Dale
Karen Maher-Cochran
Mary Ann Murray
Christina Shaw
Gloria Sprigg
Dana Tulotta

2006

Nan Barrett
Liz Black
William Bogardus
Charles DiSapio
Karen Harris
Robert Wilson

2005

Mary Fike
Diane Garofalo
Cathy Mayo
Gene Schmidt
Patrick Taylor
Julie Wang

2004

Andrea Abbott
Rae Baczek
Elaine Casale
Karen Nagy
Alice Neal
Jonathan Smith

2003

Donna Conway
Mark Epstein
Courtney Hawes
Brenda Macri
Karen Riordan
Medard Thomas

2002

Margot Bittenbender
Jean Di Vincenzo
Mariko Iwai
Georgia Tedla
Curtis Tipton
John Whalen

2001

Michael Batcheller
Alisa Lewis
Jane Niwa
Kathryn Onofrio
Susan Whalen
John Yoon

2000

Susan Batcheller
Valerie Bolling
Barbara O'Neill
Francis Pierce II
Susan Striker
Louise Williamson

1999

Kenneth Alcorn
A. Ray Hamilton
Patricia Kohn
Frederic Stewart
Carole Tierney
Doreen Zahn

1998

Nancy-Anne Fitzgibbons
Ledell Mulvaney
Mary Pierce
Barbara Schutzman
Steve Rosenberg
Judith Fell Woods

1997

Emma Oberheuser
Susan Valenzi
Dwight Wall
Erica Wiberg
Joanne Zammit
Robert Zapor

1996

Christine Anderson
Joan Beiser
William Dinnean
Carolyn Gilbert
Barbara Gotch
Carol Sutton

1995

Daniel Barrett
Anne Gilhuly
Chris Kazanas
Susan Lickwar
Judith Petersen
Caralliene Westbrook

1994

Frank Arnone
Lissa Bentley
Victor Mazmanian
Paul Rosenblum
Marcie Schoenfeld
Jerry Snyder

1993

Jory Lockwood
Gail Montgomery
Philip Nobile
Sara Reilly
Candace Robinson
Janet Stroble

1992

John Boyton
Jane Carlin
Susan Hart
Dena Phelps
Carmel Signa
Martha Taylor

1991

Brigid Barry
William Bechem
Elinor Carr
Richard Kohn
Jane Kahn
Camilla Rogers

1990

Joan Lowe
Terrence Lowe
Julie Machen
Mary Seitzer
Lee Spong
Steve Wallerstein

1989

Joel Adelberg
Dolores Kenny
Ralph Pettie
Richard Piotrkowski
Carol Rosenberg
Ardith Williams

1988

Martha Awdziejewicz
Carmelita Brooks
Marjorie Klar
Harry Kropp
Kenneth Lyon
Lorraine Termini

1987

Esther Bushell
Christine Gunn
Jeanette Hotchkiss
George Mathes
Anne Modugno
Harold Trachtenberg

1986

Elizabeth Hughes
Shirle Jankowich
Mary Livezey
Marilyn Maxwell
David Ross
Lynn Washington

1985

Ellwood Autuori
Kathy Barnes
Josephine Frame
Lois Hebert
Barbara Lewis
Betsy Perna-Smith

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS

- Inspires enthusiasm, expects students to take responsibility for their own learning and elicits a high level of achievement from students in relation to their individual abilities
- Demonstrates and continues to pursue a high mastery of subject matter and best practices for instruction
- Earns the respect of students, parents and colleagues
- Communicates effectively with parents and students
- Collaborates and makes contributions to improve overall student achievement within the classroom
- Makes contributions to improve the school and/or the District beyond the classroom



DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS AWARDS

Celebrating Excellence