



DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS AWARDS
Celebrating Excellence

**THE DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS
AWARDS CEREMONY**



TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2012

4:00 - 5:30 P.M.

WESTERN MIDDLE SCHOOL



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 ability, encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and shows mastery of subject matter. The six teachers selected this year personify the criteria of a Distinguished Teacher.

PROGRAM

WELCOME

Terry Starr-Klein

Principal, Western Middle School

MUSICAL SELECTIONS

Greenwich Public Schools Festival Orchestra

Conducted by Mercy Vaillancourt

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION AND MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Car Westbrook

Chairman, Distinguished Teachers Awards Committee

COMMENTS

Roger J. Lulow

Superintendent of Schools

COMMENTS

Peter Tesei

First Selectman of Greenwich

PRESENTATION OF 2012 DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS

Nominators of Recipients

CLOSING COMMENTS

Leslie B. Moriarty

Chairman, Board of Education

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

2011-12
DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS AWARDS
COMMITTEE

Car Westbrook, Chairman, Community
Tammy Collins, Vice-Chairman, Community
Susan Batcheller, Secretary, Community
Kevin Coutant, Treasurer, Community

Donna Curtis, PTAC
Jennifer Dayton, BOE
Cathy Delehanty, GEA
Jo Frame, GOSA
Ellen Hawley, Community
Bianka Kortlan-Cox, Community
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Barbara O'Neill, BOE
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Natalie Queen, Community
Sue Rogers, PTAC
Margaret Santhanam, Community
Fran Schapperle, Community
Angela Schmidt, GOSA

Kim Eves, Ex-Officio

DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS 2012

CHRISTINE BEGOLE

Eastern Middle School

Advanced Learning Program/English, Grades 6-8

ANDREW BRAMANTE

Greenwich High School

Science/Science Research, Grades 9-12

RICHARD KURTZMAN

Greenwich High School

Mathematics, Grades 9-12

ELIZABETH MANNING

North Street School

Kindergarten

BARBARA BRENNAN OXER

Old Greenwich School

Grade 4

CYNTHIA SHERWIN

North Street School

Grade 5

NOMINATORS OF RECIPIENTS

JANICE MERRILL

NOMINATED CHRISTINE BEGOLE

LINDA LE BRETON

NOMINATED ANDREW BRAMANTE

OLIVIA SCHARFMAN

NOMINATED RICHARD KURTZMAN

SANDRA MINICHETTI

NOMINATED ELIZABETH MANNING

JILL VOLMER

NOMINATED BARBARA BRENNAN OXER

LIESBETH CARBALLO

NOMINATED CYNTHIA SHERWIN



CHRISTINE BEGOLE

EASTERN MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVANCED LEARNING PROGRAM /ENGLISH, GRADES 6-8

Parent nominator Janice Merrill said of Christine Begole, “She challenges (the students) to uncover information, but then to evaluate it for themselves. Spouting an accepted, previously published viewpoint is unsatisfactory; students are required to think for themselves, to analyze and support their own ideas through synthesis of data from a variety of disciplines.” Ms. Merrill states that the approach works “so well because this teacher affords each of (the students) the respect of an independent thinker.” Ms. Begole’s colleague Bridget Suvansri notes, “Chris is much more than (our school’s) Advanced Learning Program Facilitator, she understands the diverse academic and social needs of advanced learners, and she sees these learners as more than just a homogeneous group of kids that are “easy to teach.” Chris understands that advanced learning classes are as heterogeneous a mixture as any non-leveled class, and these students need a differentiated approach to learning as well.” Ms. Suvansri continues, “In an effort to continually improve her technique and awareness of the advanced learner, Chris frequently avails herself of any coursework or workshops in the field to deepen her understanding. Therefore, it is no surprise that she is an expert at differentiating for the advanced learner and is able to consistently elicit a level of achievement commensurate with each student’s ability while inspiring a love of learning.” Ms. Merrill adds, “(Ms. Begole’s) teaching methodology opens doors for students, but most importantly teaches them how to open doors for themselves.”

After a twenty-four year career as a professional writer for major consumer magazines, Ms. Begole began teaching at Eastern Middle School in 1999. She has taught 6th Grade Advanced Language Arts, 8th Grade Advanced English, and Interdisciplinary Seminar for Grades 6, 7 and 8. She is the teacher advisor for the school's Debate Team, reaching State finals in a number of years and in 2011 Eastern students placed 2nd, 3rd and 4th in the competition. She is also the building coordinator for the school's Wordmasters Challenge, where students consistently rank in the top 10 nationally. In 2012, the 6th, 7th and 8th grade all achieved perfect scores in the Wordmasters competition. She also facilitates the student Knitting Club after school, providing a reminder that it is important to find time to relax and do something you enjoy. Ms. Begole is an active participant in curriculum and program development having served on the ALP Curriculum Committees in 2006 and 2007, and on the Program Review Committee from 2009-2012. She has also been a member of Eastern's School Improvement Team for the last three years. Ms. Begole is a life-long learner, currently working on completing her 6th Year Certificate, she has recently attended Harvard's DataWise professional development workshop, and a training on Differentiation for Gifted Students.

A graduate of Greenwich High School in 1971, Ms. Begole received a B.A. in Studio Art and English from Brown University, Providence, RI in 1975, and a M.A. in Teaching and Foundation from Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT in 2000.





ANDREW BRAMANTE

GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE-CHEMISTRY/ RESEARCH, GRADES 9-12

“Once or twice in a lifetime, if you are lucky, you meet a teacher who changes your life. For me, that teacher was Andy Bramante,” said Eliza McNitt ’09, now a drama major. “Mr. B treated me and my ideas with encouragement and respect. I proved you don’t have to be a science genius to win the INTEL International Science Fair. You must, however, be lucky enough to have the support of a teacher like Mr. B.” Students such as Eliza, parents, colleagues and administrators alike are consistent in their accolades of Chemistry and Independent Science Research teacher Andy Bramante. His ‘contagious energy and enthusiasm,’ ‘out-of-the-box thinking,’ ‘exceptional ability to connect with students,’ unmatched technical expertise,’ ability to ‘push students to think independently and to challenge conventional ideas,’ ‘after hours, weekend, and school break work with students,’ and ‘extraordinary care, dedication and effort’ are phrases used to describe him from everyone that knows and works with him. As a result, Mr. Bramante’s students have won at least one of the top four prizes at the Connecticut Science Fair in each of the five years he has taught the research class; and nine of the twenty students have been awarded an opportunity to compete at Intel International Science and Engineering Fair during this time. His students are also regularly invited to attend and have received prizes at the International Sustainable World Project Olympiad, the Stockholm Junior Water Prize competition, the Siemens Science Competition and the Intel Senior Talent

Search. GHS graduate David Finkelstein '10 sums it up, "(Mr. Bramante) has taught me academic integrity through his strict citation standards, improved my presentation skills through countless run-throughs before science fairs, instilled in me a strong work ethic through his example of providing access to the lab during and after school hours, and taught me to explore new things by embracing my intrinsic interests."

Mr. Bramante has over 25 years of experience in teaching as well as the technical training and experience of chemical professionals in the use of analytical instrumentation. As a product specialist and design engineer for international instrumentation companies (Hitachi, PerkinElmer, Foxboro) from 1987 to 2005, Mr. Bramante brings a wealth of real-world knowledge, experience and expertise to the classroom. As a teacher at Greenwich High School since 2005, he has taught Chemistry, Honors Chemistry, and Honors Independent Science Research courses. He holds Final Chemistry Exam "Review Parties" open to students in any section of chemistry, he speaks at local organizations such as the League of Women Voters and Retired Greenwich Executives, attends his student's sporting events, and was asked to serve as Chemistry Counselor for the Greenwich Boy Scouts Association by his students. He has also been an Adjunct Professor at Sacred Heart University since 1989, teaching Organic & Biochemistry for Nursing, and Environmental Chemistry.

Mr. Bramante received a B.S. in Chemistry from Fordham University, Bronx, NY in 1984, and a M.S. in Chemistry from Fordham's Graduate School of Arts & Sciences in 1987.





RICHARD KURTZMAN

GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL MATHEMATICS, GRADES 9-12

Richard Kurtzman's student nominator, Oliva Scharfman said, "with newfound confidence and love of mathematics, I can pursue any career in the (science/math) area that I want. Mr. Kurtzman opened those doors for me, which changed my life. He deserves to be recognized as a truly wonderful teacher." His sense of humor, well-planned lessons, knowledge and use of technology, high standards and clear expectations are cited as just some of the reasons for Mr. Kurtzman's success as a teacher by students, staff and parents alike. House Administrator for Math Dana Tulotta, said, "A high level of engagement is witnessed when observing his classes, and is partially because of the purposeful planning he does to present the content." He sets high expectations for his students and for himself as a teacher. He posts the students' grades online on a password-protected site and makes them available to parents as well. Olivia notes, "We can see how we're doing at any given moment. We can figure out what to change to do better. Mr. Kurtzman seems to be one step ahead." His colleague and the parent of one of his former students, Maryann Franchella, notes, "Richard is a true professional and an exemplary teacher. His students can use the well-developed classroom experiences as an invaluable tool leading them toward mastery of the material and the ability to build connections between Mathematical concepts. (His) students are encouraged to be responsible and respectful at all times, and Richard demonstrates the very same qualities to them with his own behavior."

An educator for almost forty years, Mr. Kurtzman began teaching in 1974 at Cloonan Middle School in Stamford, CT. For ten years, from 1984 to 1994, he managed a technical and marketing team for Seikosha America in Mahwah, NJ, providing end-user technical support and training sessions for company vendors and sales representatives. In 1994, he returned to the public schools, teaching Mathematics at Bassick High School in Bridgeport, CT, as well as Math and Computer Software at Gibbs College in Norwalk, CT. Mr. Kurtzman has been with Greenwich High School since 1997, and in the last fifteen years has taught most of the math courses at the high school including, Algebra I, Geometry, Precalculus, and AP Calculus AB. He is currently the course leader for the Geometry and Precalculus courses at GHS, and has acted as Learning Facilitator for the Mathematics Department and for Computer Application Learning. Mr. Kurtzman has also taught college level Algebra courses at Norwalk Community College, Norwalk, CT since 1997.

Mr. Kurtzman received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mathematics from Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT in 1974 and a Masters Degree in Secondary Administration and Supervision from Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT in 1980.





ELIZABETH MANNING

NORTH STREET SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN

Elizabeth Manning's parent nominator Sandra Minichetti said, " (Her) tireless dedication and diligence towards personal and professional development fuel her mastery and effective teaching methods. She sincerely focuses on the needs of each individual child, teaching effectively to the differentiated levels of ability." North Street School Assistant Principal Mary Grandville summarizes, " 'Start with what children can do,' 'build on their strengths,' 'instill a love of learning,' these are the values that Dr. Manning strongly believes leads to the success of her students." Dr. Manning's colleagues attest, " Elizabeth brings an unparalleled breadth of teaching skills to any team she works with. Her experience....provides her with a wealth of pedagogical knowledge, not to mention a broad perspective of child development." Dr. Manning's nominator concludes that her students are "fortunate to be enlightened by a teacher who is as focused on the efficacy of her teaching methods as she is enamored with the accomplishments of each child. The curriculum is the necessary raw material, but it is her ingenious ability to evolve reading and writing into math into science into social studies in a comprehensive manner with the warmth, love, and infectious enthusiasm so vital for the souls of children, that perpetuates the learning."

As a teacher with the Greenwich Public Schools at North Street School for the last seven years, Dr. Manning has taught Kindergarten through Grade 3. She is a curriculum and

team leader, continuously studying best practices and sharing with colleagues. She is Lead Teacher at North Street School and is a member of both the Student Assistance Team and the Mathematics Assessment Writing Team. She has been a member of the School Improvement Team and participated in the District's Administrative Aspirant Program. She began her career as a K-6 teacher and Science Specialist in 1971 at Floral Park-Bellerose UFSD in Floral Park, NY (1971-1981). She then left teaching to study law and worked as a part-time Legal Assistant. She returned to teaching in 1986 with the Garden City Public Schools in Garden City, NY. After being admitted to the New York State Bar in 1988, she worked as an Attorney/Manager with Citicorp/Citibank in New York for one year. From 1989 to 2000, she taught primary grades at a number of schools in New York State, and one year at Riverside School (1989-90), before coming to North Street School in 2002.

Dr. Manning received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology and Education from Molloy College, Rockville Centre, NY in 1971, a Master of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Adelphi University, Garden City, NY in 1974, and a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Administration from Columbia University's Teachers College, New York, NY in 1998. She also received a J.D. from Brooklyn Law School, Brooklyn, NY in 1985 and was admitted to the New York State Bar in 1988.





BARBARA BRENNAN OXER

OLD GREENWICH SCHOOL GRADE 4

Ms. Oxer's parent nominator Jill Volmer states, "Barbara truly makes a difference in her students' lives through her high-quality teaching. This is evident in three major areas: setting a standard for teaching excellence, instilling in her students a strong sense of responsibility and ownership, and engendering respect for fellow classmates and teachers." A lifelong resident of Greenwich, Ms. Oxer is noted for providing real-world, hands-on learning experiences for her students. As she describes, "I have developed and taught collaborative lessons with the Music and Media teachers. Upon application, I received challenge grants for my grade level from the PTA for literacy bags for retell; an owl pellet study; and kits to make solar cars. My classes have investigated fish anatomy using dead fish, worked in a 'mock' forensic crime lab, participated in 'Earth Dynamics Day' to experience weathering and erosion, and wired electrical circuits for a 'shoe box' room." Ms. Oxer's fourth grade colleague notes, "After spending countless hours planning instruction with Barbara, I have recognized the depth of her experience with curriculum and teaching and learning. Barbara consistently identifies teaching points that challenge students in their thinking and scaffolds their learning to new levels. She is able to take students where they are and encourage them to reach new heights. She inspires and engages students with lessons that have clear objectives and multiple opportunities for learning." Old Greenwich School Principal Patricia Raneri said, "(Ms. Oxer) is a reflective practitioner always looking for solid strategies

to improve student learning...such as readers and writers workshop, Accountable Talk, and science inquiry. As a result of this professional dedication, her students are instructed to reach the highest level of performance.”

After more than twenty years working in the private sector, as a Certified Public Accountant, Ms. Ozer began her career as a teacher at Old Greenwich School in 2002. She has taught kindergarten, first and fifth grades and is currently a fourth grade teacher. She is a peer-selected member of the Superintendent’s Teacher Advisory Committee and a member of the Old Greenwich School Improvement and Data Teams. She is also serving her second term as the teacher liaison member of the OGS PTA, and is involved in the District-wide development of Transdisciplinary Units. She has been an active participant in curriculum writing, led professional learning workshops for colleagues, and communicated regularly with the parents of her students to keep them informed of their child’s academic progress and class happenings. She holds twice yearly ‘State of the Class’ presentations for parents, as well as twice weekly newsletters, a website with posted homework, and Author Teas.

Ms. Ozer received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and Accounting from the University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT in 1977, and a Master of Science degree in Elementary Education (2001) and a Sixth Year Certificate in Educational Administration and Supervision (2009) both from the University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT.





CYNTHIA SHERWIN

NORTH STREET SCHOOL GRADE 5

Cynthia Sherwin's skills and talents as a teacher are described by a parent contributing to her nomination, "Through devotion and patience, a wealth of experience, and an obvious love for her job, Ms. Sherwin attacks her goals. She can analyze children quickly and efficiently for strengths and weakness and pays very close attention to both academic and social needs. She has an extremely unique ability to take this knowledge and teach material in a way that it almost seeps into the children. She can intuitively sense when a student has mastered the lesson, and if they haven't, she knows exactly how to modify what she's teaching to fit each student." Ms. Sherwin is a consummate learner, absorbing new knowledge in best practices and formally and informally sharing that knowledge with colleagues. As a parent, she recognizes the value of communicating with the parents of her students and involves them in their child's learning through regular progress reports, newsletters, volunteer opportunities, and suggested activities for connecting with the curriculum. North Street School Principal Charles Smith concludes, "(Ms. Sherwin) has an unparalleled ability to make all students feel valued and included as equal and contributing members of the classroom. Her expectations for achievement and independence are exceptionally high, but are always communicated in a genuinely warm and supportive manner. I believe that her earnest enthusiasm for her work with students is reflected in the incredible passion they bring to their own schoolwork, and in their steadfast loyalty to her as a teacher."

After more than ten years in retail management and consumer product marketing, Ms. Sherwin entered the field of education in 1992 with the Greenwich Public Schools. She began at Cos Cob School as a second grade teacher and also taught fourth and fifth grades in her thirteen years at the school. In 2005, she moved to North Street School as a fifth grade teacher. She is currently a peer-selected representative on the Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Committee and North Street School's Social Emotional Learning Committee and Student Assistance Team. She has served on the School Improvement Team, as a Liaison to the PTA, and on curriculum development committees for Science, Social Studies and Reading/Language Arts. Ms. Sherwin received two Connecticut Celebration of Excellence Awards for a Social Studies Unit on Japan that she developed after receiving a Fulbright Memorial Fund Teachers Program award and a three-week trip to Japan. From 1976-1979 she was a Buyer for Abraham & Straus; an Assistant Product Manager for Warner Lambert Co. in Morris Plains, NJ, from 1981-1983 and a Senior Product Manager for Chesebrough-Pond's Inc. in Greenwich, CT from 1983-1989.

Ms. Sherwin received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Brown University, Providence, RI in 1976, a Master of Business Administration degree in Marketing from Columbia University, New York, NY in 1981, and a Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY in 1992.



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

Kiwanis Club of Greenwich
Central Middle School PTA
Cos Cob School PTA
Eastern Middle School
Greenwich High School
International School At Dundee PTA
North Street School PTA
Old Greenwich School PTA
Parkway School PTA

DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS 1985 - 2011

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 Trachtenburg

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 for learning and academic excellence
- Elicits a high level of achievement from students in relation to their ability
- Expects students to take responsibility for their own learning
- Shows a high mastery of subject matter
- Has the respect of students and colleagues
- Communicates well with parents
- Pursues personal and professional development above and beyond what is required of GPS teachers
- Contributes to curriculum and/or program development for the school or district
- Contributes to the school and/or community beyond the classroom





DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS AWARDS

Celebrating Excellence