



DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS AWARDS
Celebrating Excellence

**THE DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS
AWARDS CEREMONY**



TUESDAY, MAY 3, 2011
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 Bethany Cook

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION AND MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Fran Schapperle

Chairman, Distinguished Teachers Awards Committee

COMMENTS

Sidney A. Freund

Superintendent of Schools

COMMENTS

Peter Tesei

First Selectman

PRESENTATION OF 2011 DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS

Nominators of Recipients

COMMENTS

Scott Frantz

State Senator

CLOSING COMMENTS

Steven B. Anderson

Chairman, Board of Education

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

2010-II
DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS AWARDS
COMMITTEE

Fran Schapperle, Chairman, *Community*
Jo Frame Vice-Chairman, *Community*
Caralliene Westbrook Secretary, *Community*
Kevin Coutant Assistant Treasurer, *Community*

Susan Batcheller, *GOSA*
Jonathan Cohen, *BOE*
Tammy Collins, *PTAC*
Donna Curtis, *Community*
Cathy Delehanty, *GEA*
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Natalie Queen, *BOE*
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Margaret Santhanam, *PTAC*
Kathy Steiner, *GEA*
Mary Lou Tolette, *PTAC*
Barbara Tormondsen, *Community*
Kay Yamamoto, *Community, Rotary*
Kim Eves, *Ex-Officio*

DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS 2011

KAREN BOYEA

Greenwich High School
Social Studies, Grades 9-12

MEREDITH DANIELS

Riverside School
Grade 5

LAURA DONNELLY

Eastern Middle School
Science, Grade 6

KAREN FOSTER

North Mianus School
Kindergarten

NAN NELSON

Glenville School
Advanced Learning Program, Grades 2-5

JENNIFER PRELI

Greenwich High School
Mathematics, Grade 9-12

NOMINATORS OF RECIPIENTS

SARAH FOUNTAIN

NOMINATED KAREN BOYEA

LINDA DELGADO

NOMINATED MEREDITH DANIELS

BRIDGET SUVANSRI

NOMINATED LAURA DONNELLY

MONICA WARE

NOMINATED KAREN FOSTER

SUSAN ROGERS

NOMINATED NAN NELSON

JENNIFER CAPLAN

NOMINATED JENNIFER PRELI



KAREN BOYEA

**GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL
SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES 9-12**

Student Nominator Sarah Fountain said, “In the eyes of students at Greenwich High School, Ms. Boyea represents the ideal teacher. She is knowledgeable, clear, and challenging, as well as understanding and approachable.” She is known by students and colleagues alike to have high expectations for each of her students, providing challenging class work and thought-provoking assignments. Folsom Housemaster, Jory Lockwood, said, “Ms. Boyea is the champion of the individual student. She forges relationships with her classes and the students in them, and this helps her to maximize each student’s learning.” She is masterful at differentiating the instruction and support necessary to help her students succeed, and in engaging them in the learning process. Last year, Ms. Boyea entirely re-vamped her approach to homework. Moving from mechanical, multi-question, “google-able,” homework assignments to one essential question that requires critical thinking and personal points of view. This approach has led to an increase in completed assignments and more thoughtful and engaged discussions in the classroom.

Ms. Boyea understands the importance of communicating with and involving parents in their child’s academic progress. Beyond the required progress reports and report cards, she makes a point of contacting parents if she has a concern with a student’s progress while there is still an opportunity to avert a poor grade. Additionally, she makes “good news calls” to parents, which

boosts motivation for the student and provides an opportunity to talk to the parents about the course. Karen Boyea reflects, “Teaching is a labor of love for me and I am continually reflecting on ways to challenge my students to think critically, engage them in meaningful discussions, and to inspire a lifetime love of learning.” A teacher of Honors American History and AP U.S. History, Ms. Boyea devours every opportunity to enhance her already vast knowledge of history. She attends the Gilder Lehrman and New York Historical Society’s seminars. She also attended the Taft Advanced Placement Summer Conference for AP US History, completing the rigorous process for becoming an Early College Experience instructor at UCONN. Sarah Fountain continues, “Ms. Boyea is looked up to by all of her students. She makes an effort to get to know her students, and allows them to get to know her as well. As a result, students always feel comfortable approaching her for academic questions and advice. Her students treat her with respect because that is how she treats them.”

Teaching since 2000, Ms. Boyea spent two years at Sacred Heart Academy in Hamden, CT, before joining the Greenwich Public Schools at Greenwich High School in 2002. She is a trained TEAM Mentor supporting new teachers, and a member of the Social Studies Curriculum Review and Weighted Grades Committees. She is a regular advisor for student extra-curricular activities, currently serving in the role for the Help-A-Dog Club. She also makes a special effort to attend her students’ athletic and performance events. Ms. Boyea received a Bachelor of Arts in History from Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT in 1999, and a Master of Arts in Education from Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT in 2003.





MEREDITH DANIELS

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL
GRADE 5

Parent Nominator Linda Delgado said, “Meredith (Daniel’s) progressive methods and inclusive philosophy create a differentiated experience that impacts each student. She pursues success for the individual student through a personalized, modern, and confidence enriching classroom environment.” Ms. Daniels explains, “Anyone can produce at a high level if they are motivated by the work that they do. This is where individualized curriculum comes into play. . .I develop learning plans for EACH child in my classroom.” Ms. Daniels initiated a pilot program in her classroom to support this objective. She applied for and received several grants to support the training and resources necessary to implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in her classroom – “a set of principles for curriculum development that gives all individuals equal opportunities to learn, providing a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone – NOT a single one size fits all solution, but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.” To augment and facilitate this approach to differentiating instruction, she has participated in the online professional development offered by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) – “an educational research and developmental organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals through UDL.” Technology plays a large role in supporting this differentiated approach. Ms. Daniels is adept at incorporating

various forms of technology to address the needs and interests of her students including the use of the SmartBoard, iPod Touches, Flip Cameras, and wikispaces. Ms. Delgado concludes, “(this approach) results in students more actively defining success for themselves, creating greater confidence, and encouraging students to take responsibility for their academic efforts.”

A teacher for 16 years, Ms. Daniels has taught most grade levels from Kindergarten through seventh grade, joining the Greenwich Public Schools in 2008 as a fifth grade teacher at Riverside School. Her experience in virtually every grade level has provided her with the advantageous perspective of the continuum of learning that occurs throughout these school years. She is cognizant of and plans for what is needed as her students progress from one grade to the next. She is a CT TEAM Mentor for teachers new to the profession and a Reflections Paper Reviewer for the State’s program. She is advisor to the student run newspaper – The Riverside Reporter, and is coordinating the Arts Field Day for the school. Ms. Daniels received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY in 1991, and a Masters in Education and a Sixth Year Certificate for Educational Leadership and as a Reading Consultant from the University of Bridgeport, Stamford, CT in 2008.





LAURA DONNELLY

EASTERN MIDDLE SCHOOL
SCIENCE, GRADE 6

Colleague Nominator Bridget Suvansri said, “Laura Donnelly is a naturally talented teacher who is passionate about teaching and learning and committed to preparing students to meet the challenges of the real world. (She) is a master teacher who uses differentiation and real-life connections to elicit a high level of interest and achievement from all students in her heterogeneous classes.” Last year, Ms. Donnelly’s classes partnered with NASA and the International Space Station to conduct an experiment with butterflies. Live feeds from space allowed the classes to compare their data with the Space Station’s results. This project represents just one way that Ms. Donnelly incorporates curriculum objectives into real world situations and engages her students in the learning process. She describes her role as getting students to “think, rather than just focus on the outcome (“the right answer”). (She) wants them to be unafraid to ask questions, take risks, and even fail, knowing that learning is always taking place.” Ms. Donnelly uses a variety of techniques, resources, and strategies to foster engagement, inquiry, and critical thinking. Using these differentiated strategies, she addresses the varying needs of each student in her classroom and “ignites students’ joy of discovery.”

Ms. Donnelly reaches beyond her own classroom to support the students in the school, working in Eastern’s supplemental

programs, including Jump Start, Homework Club, and CMT Prep classes. She also piloted an Organizational Advisor Base for Grade 6 students and is a member of the EMS Crisis Team. From the District perspective, Ms. Donnelly is an invaluable member of the ongoing Science Curriculum Review, working summers to write new curriculum and piloting new units in her classroom. The consummate Science learner and enthusiast, Ms. Donnelly attends numerous workshops, seminars, and conferences to continue her learning. She has attended two week-long workshops on Biodiversity and Human Health and the Geology of Connecticut at Yale's Peabody Institute; a DNA Epicenter training; "Project Astro" – at Wesleyan University, using astronomy to teach scientific process and problem solving skills; a number of programs offered by the CT Department of Environmental Protection; and four NSTA Conferences. A respected and supportive colleague, Ms. Donnelly is consistently voted by her peers to represent them in the Greenwich Education Association; she is a TEAM Mentor for teachers new to the profession and Reflections Paper reviewer for the State, and she has mentored student teachers.

After twelve years working in the advertising field for several firms in New York City, Ms. Donnelly received her Masters in Education and began teaching in the New Canaan (CT) Public Schools. In 2003, she came to the Greenwich Public Schools as a sixth grade Science teacher for Eastern Middle School. Ms. Donnelly received a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Management from the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH in 1977, and a Master of Science in Education from the University of Bridgeport in 2001. She also received a MBA from the University of New Hampshire's Whittemore School of Business in 1980.





KAREN FOSTER

NORTH MIANUS SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN

Parent Nominator Monica Ware said, “Karen Foster is able to meet the academic needs of all children in her class by working with them in various modalities to help each child learn and be successful based on their preferred learning style. She understands that each child develops at a different rate and incorporates this information into her daily lessons and activities. She is clear and purposeful and has created a community of learners.”

She strives to create independence in her young students and once achieved they are positioned to make individual contributions to the classroom and progress toward achieving their academic goals. She begins by instilling a sense of belonging and providing a safe environment for learning. Then she provides them with, in her words “the keys to motivation: variety, autonomy, feedback, and a feeling that what they are doing is important.”

Ms. Foster is a voracious learner herself. Having spent time in both independent and facilitated professional learning opportunities, she gained the knowledge and skills necessary to lead the NMS team to make some changes in the word study program. The changes resulted in opportunities to enhance the program to make differentiating instruction more facile and to focus on each child’s strengths and areas of concern. NMS Principal Angela Schmidt said, “This increased focus on providing a strong phonics program has resulted in very impressive gains in student performance.”

Karen Foster understands what it takes to be a Distinguished Teacher, as she summarizes, “I have the responsibility to develop and expand a child’s curiosity and knowledge, and for developing the well being of the whole student. I have the responsibility to build an environment of security and respect for a child to be his/her best. I have the responsibility to nurture the full spectrum of his/her needs and to be an advocate for all students in my class. The children are our future and I do my best to make their first year in elementary school a springboard to a successful future.”

A teacher for over sixteen year, Ms. Foster began teaching at North Mianus School in 1995 and has taught Kindergarten and Third Grade. As a member of the North Mianus School community, she currently serves on the School-wide Data Team and the Social Emotional Learning Committee. She is the Early Placement Student Services Coordinator for Kindergarten and the liaison for NMS with area preschools. She has also served on various professional learning and curriculum review committees and created the school schedule for over 10 years. Ms. Foster received a Bachelor of Arts degree in early Childhood/Elementary Education from Saint Leo University, Saint Leo, FL in 1990; a Master in the Arts of Teaching from Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT in 1991; and a Sixth Year Certificate in Technology in Education from Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT in 1998.





NAN NELSON

**GLENVILLE SCHOOL
ADVANCED LEARNING PROGRAM,
GRADES 2-5**

Anna “Nan” Nelson holds high expectations for her students and for herself – a repeatedly emphasized theme held consistently by Ms. Nelson’s nominator, colleagues and students. Parent Nominator Susan Rogers said, “She has high expectations of the children and very quickly instilled in them high expectation of themselves. . . . She instills in them a strong sense that the challenge they face at (a given) moment is doable. Her expectations of her students go far beyond reading, writing and arithmetic. It is about growing as a student emotionally; about being organized in your materials, your thought and yourself.” Glenville’s Assistant Principal Janean Smith said, “Ms. Nelson’s success rests on the high expectations she has for herself and for her students as well as her persistent dedication to high student achievement. At any given time, you will find her thoroughly researching to become a master of content and studiously planning and implementing lessons requiring meaningful collaboration between students.” Ms. Nelson’s colleague Dianne Barone said, “She clearly understands that by establishing high expectations, and then providing the support necessary to achieve these expectations, high rates of student achievement will logically follow.”

Due to her facility with multiple content areas and instructional strategies, Ms. Nelson adeptly maneuvered a series of moves during a school reconstruction project. Students and staff were moved from the “old” Glenville School, dispersed to other District elementary schools, then to a temporary modular unit,

and finally returned back to a “new” Glenville School. During this time, she managed to hold the same high expectations that she is known for, presented consistent and challenging instruction, provided reassurance for students and parents alike, and achieved high levels of student performance, whether working in a closet-sized classroom space or in a hallway. Ms. Rogers said, “Not only did we get through that year, the kids thrived and matured beyond anyone’s expectations as a direct result of Nan’s steady hand and excellent captaining.” Ms. Smith summarizes, “(Ms. Nelson) is the epitome of a distinguished teacher. Her work ethic is unparalleled, she has incredible knowledge of her students developmentally, as individuals and as learners, and she accepts nothing less than the best from each child while holding herself to the same high standards and expectations.”

Ms. Nelson has been a teacher for 30 years. From 1975 to 1984, she taught a variety of grades and programs located around the world, including Tehran, Iran, Montgomery County, MD, Telluride, CO, and Warsaw, Poland. From 1985 to 1990, she worked as an editor and project manager for educational publishers. In 1990, she returned to teaching, beginning her tenure with the Greenwich Public Schools at Glenville School. Ms. Nelson also served as an Instructional Coach for teachers from 2000-2007, providing support to new teachers as they transitioned into their roles, and supporting new and experienced teachers during new program and curriculum implementation. She has served on the District’s Elementary Report Card Committee and participated in the ALP Review. She is a member of Glenville School’s “Principal’s Cabinet” and the School Data Team. Ms. Nelson received a Bachelor of Science in Education from Wheelock College, Boston, MA in 1975, and a Master of Education from Boston University, Boston, MA in 1990.





JENNIFER PRELI

GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL MATHEMATICS, GRADES 9-12

Student Nominator Jennifer Caplan said, “Ms. Preli demonstrates those unique qualities that set her apart from her peers. She has not only mastered the subject of mathematics, but brings enthusiasm to the material that keeps a student interested throughout the year. In fact, she brings a math lesson alive by showing how the material relates to real life situations.” Ms. Preli goes above and beyond to support students; Jennifer Caplan remarks, “She is always willing to meet with you any time or place to discuss homework or test results...she stays late or (comes) in early to meet (with students)...(and) she is always smiling even if it was the third time that she (is) explaining the material...I don’t think she ever met a math problem that she could not break down easily into understandable parts.”

Ms. Preli is dedicated to knowing her students - their individual needs, strengths and challenges as well as their personal interests. She holds high expectations for each of her students. This year, she has a student that is visually impaired in one of her classes. Ms. Preli, maintains the same learning expectations for this student as for any other, and has altered her teaching approach to ensure that this student receives the instruction necessary to be successful in class. Ms. Preli notes, “This situation has helped me become better at differentiating each lesson to (meet) the needs of all students. It has taught me how to encourage and challenge students of various learning types (auditory and visual) to explore new methods of understanding concepts.”

For these reasons and much more, she is a positive role model for teachers new to the profession and has garnered the respect of her more veteran colleagues. Greenwich High School Math Program Administrator Dana Tulotta summarizes, “On a day to day basis Ms. Preli, with much ease, inspires enthusiasm for learning and academic excellence. The positive learning environment she has established for all of her classrooms sets the tone for the high level of academic achievement she instills in her students. Her sense of humor, knowledge of mathematics, love of teaching, and passion for working with students of various learning abilities is evident to everyone who knows Jen. She is a natural facilitator of learning and cares deeply about every student that walks through her classroom door.”

A teacher of Mathematics at Greenwich High School since 2005, Ms. Preli has taught a variety of courses including, Math Applications, Bridge to Algebra, Algebra 2 (grade level and honors), and Statistics 1 and 2. She has been the course leader for the Bridge to Algebra, Algebra 2 and Statistics courses, responsible for communicating with other teachers to review pacing charts, and mid term and final exams. She was the Class Advisor for the Class of 2010, Co-Advisor for the school’s Peer Mentors program, and advisor for the Senior SRO (Standing Room Only). She is also the JV Softball Coach for the Greenwich High School Girls Team. Ms. Preli received a Bachelor of Science in Math Education in 2004 and a Master of Arts Education in 2005 from the University of Connecticut’s Neag School of Education, Storrs, CT.



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

Rotary Club of Greenwich
Kiwanis Club of Greenwich
Cos Cob School PTA
North Mianus School PTA
North Street School PTA
Riverside School PTA

*A special thank you to The Rotary Club of Greenwich for
sponsoring the reception following the ceremony.*

DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS 1985 - 2010

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 Awdziejwicz
 Carmelita Brooks
 Marjorie Klar
 Harry Kropp
 Kenneth Lyon
 Lorraine Termini

1987

Esther Bushell
 Christine Gunn
 Jeanete 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