



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2025

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Derby Public Schools I Make A Difference Award Winners Announced at Board of Education Meeting on March 24

Jayson Miller, staff, and Virginia Snell, volunteer, are the March recipients of the I Make A Difference Award.

This month's Staff I Make A Difference Award winner is Jayson Miller, a Physical Education Teacher at Tanglewood Elementary. Jayson Miller is a dedicated PE Teacher who has made a significant impact beyond the classroom in many ways. Stepping in as a full-time PE Teacher last year, he has invested not only in the physical health of students but in the overall culture of Tanglewood.

Jayson is a strong advocate for Tanglewood students, consistently volunteering to support school events and stepping in whenever a need arises. His adaptability and eagerness to help in any situation make him a true embodiment of what it means to be a team player. He helped with planning a field day and collaborated with the community to secure resources and ensure that this event would be a fun experience for students. It's clear that his commitment to Tanglewood extends well beyond his primary duties, making sure students and staff feel supported.

Jayson's contributions don't stop there, one example of his support came during a snowstorm, when the operations team members were shoveling snow to ensure that students and staff could move safely throughout the day. Without hesitation, he came out during his planning time to assist. It wasn't just the walkways Jayson helped clear—he also went the extra mile to sweep snow off of many staff members' cars so that they wouldn't have to worry about snow or ice while driving home at the end of the day.

This month's Volunteer I Make A Difference Award winner is Virginia Snell, volunteer at Stone Creek Elementary. Virginia, affectionately known to the students as "Grandma Ginny," has dedicated her time to ensuring every student feels seen and celebrated during Stone Creek's new monthly birthday lunch program this school year. Grandma Ginny is not just a volunteer; she is a friend, a role model and a warm presence in the lives of every student she encounters. Every month, she drives from northwest Wichita to participate in a birthday lunch for all the students celebrating that month, ensuring no child is left out.

Her role goes far beyond simply showing up. She steps into the lunchroom with a spirit of kindness and care, especially for those students whose families may not be able to attend. Whether it's sitting with a group of students or stepping in as a "birthday guest" for a child without a visitor, Grandma Ginny brings light and joy to each and every birthday celebration. She takes the time to speak with them, asking about their school favorites and wishing them a happy birthday. It doesn't matter if the student is in kindergarten or a fifth-grader

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Derby Public Schools strives to create a safe and inclusive culture and a comprehensive educational experience that propels students toward their fullest potential so they can positively impact their community.

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—her friendly face and warm presence make everyone feel special.

It is clear that Grandma Ginny's commitment to these students goes above and beyond. She rearranges her personal schedule and appointments just to be there each month. She gives her time selflessly, celebrating up to 50-60 students each month and showing these students that they are cared for. Grandma Ginny even brings small gifts to share with the students, like letting them pick out a school supply item.

Stone Creek Principal Sandy Rusher, who is also her daughter, couldn't be more grateful for Grandma Ginny's support in making sure every child feels special on their birthday. The kids' excitement when they realize, "That's your mom!" shows just how much Grandma Ginny means to the Stone Creek Elementary family.

Grandma Ginny's kindness, care and commitment to making students smile are evident through her dedicated volunteerism in the Stone Creek community.



Pictured: *(Pictured left to right)* Jayson Miller and Virginia Snell

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