



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2025

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Derby Public Schools I Make A Difference Award Winners Announced at Board of Education Meeting on October 27

Keri Haberer, staff, and Rich Marra, volunteer, are the October recipients of the I Make A Difference Award.

This month's Staff I Make A Difference Award winner is Keri Haberer, World Language Teacher at Derby High School. Keri brings dedication, advocacy and a deep belief in student potential to her work every day. As a World Language Teacher, she plays a crucial role in helping multilingual students earn the Kansas Seal of Biliteracy on their diplomas. This achievement gives students formal recognition for their language skills and opens doors for college and career opportunities. Keri actively seeks out students who may qualify and supports them throughout the process by arranging and proctoring the necessary assessments to ensure their efforts are recognized and celebrated.

Because of her support, students who might otherwise overlook or underuse their language abilities are empowered to take pride in their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. One student, who grew up in a Vietnamese-speaking home, shared how Keri's support helped her reconnect with her heritage and gain motivation to sharpen her language skills. Adam Stout, Gifted and Talented Teacher at Derby High School shared, "She helps students know that their dedication and skills do actually pay off in the end." Keri's dedication empowers students to receive academic credit and/or employment based on their language skills.

Another student, a native English speaker, was interested in earning the Seal in both Chinese and Spanish. The student was able to work with Keri to take the necessary Oral Proficiency Interviews and earn the seal in both languages, which requires a workplace-level proficiency. This impressive accomplishment is typically not acquired by most language students until the end of college coursework.

Keri's work ensures that her students' skills are not only acknowledged but valued in meaningful ways. Her quiet determination and belief in student potential truly make a difference in the lives of her students and the culture of Derby High School.

This month's volunteer I Make A Difference Award winner is Rich Marra, volunteer crossing guard at Stone Creek Elementary. Rich brings energy, joy and a fun splash of style to the Stone Creek community. As the friendly face volunteering at the morning crosswalk, he does more than help students and families arrive safely, he lifts spirits with his bright smile, positive attitude and fun shoe style.

With an impressive collection of over 300 pairs of tennis shoes, Rich is known for his colorful "kicks" that
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brighten up the morning commute. Students and parents alike are eager to see which colorful pair he'll wear next. Rich even created a Facebook page, Crosswalk Kicks, to showcase his daily shoes and invite the community to join in by voting on weekly favorites. What began as a fun idea has grown into a tradition that brings joy to the entire school and helps foster a sense of connection and community.

Now in his second year volunteering, Rich is proud to serve at the school his granddaughters attend. Service is a family value, with his daughter serving as PTO president and his son-in-law on the Site Council. As members of McConnell Air Force Base, the Marra family is passionate about giving back and fostering a positive school culture.

Featured by KAKE News earlier this school year for the joy and positivity he brings to Stone Creek, Rich is a steady and impactful presence on campus. His dedication and genuine care for students make him a valued part of the school community.



Pictured: *(left to right)* Rich Marra and Keri Haberer.

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