



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026

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Derby Public Schools I Make A Difference Award Winners Announced at Board of Education Meeting on March 23

Annie Vigil, staff, and Twice As Nice Prom, volunteers, are the March recipients of the I Make A Difference Award.

This month's Staff I Make A Difference Award winner is This month's Staff I Make A Difference Award winner is Annie Vigil, Human Resources Assistant at the District Administrative Center. As the Human Resources Assistant for Derby Public Schools, Annie consistently goes far beyond her job title to support our staff and strengthen our district. She is often the very first person new employees meet when joining Derby, and she immediately sets a welcoming and supportive tone. Annie carefully guides each new hire through the onboarding process, answering questions, explaining procedures and ensuring they feel confident and prepared from their very first day. Her kindness, approachability and deep knowledge help create a positive experience that leaves a lasting impression.

Annie's contributions extend beyond onboarding. She plays an essential role in organizing and supporting district events of all sizes. Whether coordinating logistics behind the scenes or stepping in wherever help is needed, Annie's attention to detail and willingness to serve help ensure our events run smoothly and successfully.

She also leads with creativity and enthusiasm as the head of the Wellness Committee. In this role, Annie has helped introduce numerous initiatives that encourage staff wellness and engagement. She organizes flu shot clinics, mobile mammogram visits, vaccine clinics, biometric screenings, wellness incentive programs and regular wellness meetings. She also brings creativity and fun to the workplace by coordinating wellness cooking classes, scavenger hunts and wellness challenges. Many of the Administrative Center's most memorable activities, including the Turkey Hunt and the 12 Days of Wellness Cheer, are a direct result of Annie's dedication and innovative spirit.

Even outside of her professional responsibilities, Annie continues to give back to the Derby community. As a dedicated band parent, she volunteers her time to support events, work concession stands and help wherever assistance is needed. Through her work, Annie supports not only the professional success of our employees but also their health, morale and sense of belonging.

This month's volunteer I Make A Difference Award winners are Tonia Freeman and the Twice As Nice volunteer group, hosted at the Woodlawn Methodist Church. For the past four years, Tonia has served as coordinator of

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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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the Twice As Nice Prom event, an annual prom attire giveaway originally started by members of the local Buy Nothing Derby group who recognized a need in our community.

There were many volunteers who made the event a success, with the core volunteers being Heather Welk, Darla Engel, Valerie Pape Goin, Laney Heiberg, Kristi Cole and Kay Daniels. Jeff Ohmes, Grounds Supervisor, played a large role in event logistics, as well as seamstresses Sue Hunt and Alexis Wallis, who were also on-site during the event to provide alterations, ensuring every student left not only with an outfit, but with confidence.

Each year, the group organizes the collection of donated dresses, shoes, menswear and accessories. These donations culminate in a large giveaway that ensures students who might not otherwise afford prom attire can fully participate in one of high school's most memorable milestones.

Most recently hosted at Woodlawn Methodist Church, the event faced a major challenge when unforeseen circumstances left the organization without storage space for more than two dozen tubs of inventory. Rather than allowing the event to be jeopardized, Tonia quickly began searching for solutions. Through collaboration, storage space was secured at the district's Educational Support Center, allowing the group to house its inventory and host the giveaway. Twice As Nice volunteers then relocated and organized the entire collection, spending hours steaming, sorting and hanging dresses and menswear while cleaning and displaying shoes and accessories.

Students from Derby, Mulvane, Rose Hill and Haysville have all been welcomed to shop the event, expanding its reach across the region. The Twice As Nice team has created more than a prom giveaway. They created an opportunity for students to feel seen, supported and celebrated during an important moment in their lives.



Pictured: (left to right) Annie Vigil and Tonia Freeman.

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