

2026 YOU MATTER AWARD WINNER



Christina Speaker



Penn Valley Elementary School



Christina Speaker has changed our school experience in the most meaningful way. As a parent of a child with autism and developmental delays, I carry the weight of constant advocacy. I am always thinking ahead, protecting, questioning, and making sure my son is not overlooked. Ms. Speaker has never made me feel like I am “too much.” Instead, she has made me feel like an essential part of the team.

She takes the time to truly understand my son — how he communicates, how he learns, and how he processes the world around him. She supports him with patience, consistency, and dignity. She does not assume independence where support is needed, and she does not limit his potential. She meets him exactly where he is while still believing in where he can go.

Most importantly, she sees his strengths. She celebrates his progress in ways that build his confidence and self-worth. Because of Ms. Speaker, my son feels safe, included, and capable. He is not just accommodated — he is valued.

For a parent of a child with special needs, feeling respected and heard by a teacher is everything. Christina Speaker has made us feel like we matter, like our voices count, and like my son is an important and valued member of this school community. Her impact reaches beyond the classroom. It reaches into our home, our confidence, and our hope for his future.



INTER SCHOOL COUNCIL
— Lower Merion School District —



LOWER MERION
SCHOOL DISTRICT