

Gladstone honors school employees with cash awards

The Gladstone school district launched the new school year by celebrating the accomplishments of outstanding teachers and staff through two award programs.

The Thank a Teacher Award is a \$250 cash prize recognizing excellence in instruction, school leadership, and contributions to school success. These awards are funded by an endowment created by retired principal Dick Baker in 2005. These are the winners.

Kaitlin Gillies is a fourth grade teacher at John Wetten Elementary, known for making instruction engaging and effective. The relationships she creates with students, families and peers is a model for the entire school. She is a leader among teachers, serving as a leader of the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support program, a bargaining representative, and a Professional Learning Community leader.

Kris Schuberg is a master English teacher at Gladstone High School, where she is an advocate for all students. She excels at teaching writing and giving freshmen the skills to succeed in high school. She has recently served as a founder of the district's new teacher mentor program and now serves as co-president of the Gladstone Teaching Association. Her integrity and passion make her a role model to her colleagues.

Mara Asmus is a learning specialist at Kraxberger Middle School, where she charms her way into the hearts of challenging students. She is a constant support to her colleagues and the families they serve. Her positivity and perseverance make her a valued champion for kids. This summer she left her mark on her school's new Student Wellness Center by creating colorful murals inspired by her students.

The Making a Difference Award is a \$250 cash prize to classified employees who make a positive impact on students, colleagues, their school, and the community. An anonymous donor funded this award. These are the winners.

Linda Daniels has been a cook at John Wetten Elementary since 2000. She exemplifies hard work and commitment to her job and coworkers. Staff seek her out for a hug, a laugh, or a quick story. Students count on her kind words and gentle approach. She also served the community for a few years as a volunteer at the Gladstone Food Pantry, sharing recipe ideas and nutrition information.

Jo Strong has served Gladstone schools as a technology specialist since 2002. She is timely and effective, paying attention to detail on every project. In her role, she benefits students and teachers, staff and families. Her collaborative spirit enables her to make work fun and she's always willing to find solutions to technology problems big and small.

Tressa Aplanap is the head custodian at Kraxberger Middle School. A 20-year district employee, she excels not only at caring for the school building, but for connecting with students. Kids connect with her, love her, and confide in her. She builds strong relationships with everyone around her but still holds students accountable. She steps up for adults and students alike.

PHOTO: Gladstone teachers Kaitlin Gillies, Kris Schuberg, and Mara Asmus were recognized as outstanding teachers in the Gladstone District.

PHOTO: The Gladstone School District celebrated three outstanding staff members with cash awards: technology specialist Jo Strong, cook Linda Daniels, and Tressa Aplanalp (not pictured).