

Press Clippings 5/5/2018

---Daily Herald--- 5/5/18

St. Charles East teacher named Kane County's top educator

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY

The awakening of students' civic minds is among the reasons Kyle Libberton loves teaching history and psychology.

Each day, Libberton creates a fantasy museum in students' minds, which they populate with exhibits.

"The more I can get students involved in creating and designing that day's lesson, the better it is," said Libberton, who has taught at St. Charles East High School for nine years. "That's the culture and mentality of education. You want to have that collaboration of ideas."

Libberton was named Kane County's Educator of the Year on Friday and will receive a \$3,000 classroom grant from the Kane County Regional Office of Education.

He was among 41 educators honored at the 43rd Educator of the Year banquet at the Q Center in St. Charles.

Fred Heid, superintendent of Community Unit District 300, was named Administrator of the Year.

A 19-year veteran educator, Heid is in his fourth year in District 300. He believes in building strong relationships with students, staff, parents, and community members, frequently engaging them through social media.

"At the end of the day, what matters most is that relationship and interaction between an adult and a child, and that's what we're here to support," Heid said. "The better we do that and the better we can nurture those positive interactions, the better our students and community will do."

Other winners:

Preschool: Karen Nellis, early childhood blended, Alice Gustafson Elementary, Batavia. "You have to be mentally, emotionally, and physically present each day with the students. The environment itself is a large part of the early childhood curriculum. The children have a lot of choice and self-direction in the classroom."

Elementary: **Mary Fulin, second grade, Otter Creek Elementary, Elgin.** "We all know that students come in with different social and emotional needs, so I make it a part of our curriculum. I want to teach them how to behave in different situations depending on the circumstances."

Middle school: Beth Harner, special education, Dundee Middle School, West Dundee. "I see a real need for kids to be able to make the transition from life inside of a school to being a contributing member of society. I want to prepare my students to be successful in the workplace and successful socially, as well."

High school: Susan Zagorski, English language arts interventionist, Central High, Hampshire. "High school is the time for students to try new things and learn what they want to do. It's also a time for students to take risks and make mistakes, because that's where we as teachers come in to support them."

Student support personnel: Denise Michels, counselor, Harter Middle School, Sugar Grove. "Middle school is a crucial part of a child's life. There are so many areas that they need guidance, and you get to be that person that helps guide them."

Early career: Saul Olivas, bilingual, Johnson Elementary, Aurora. "I care for the environment and community around my students and me. I've been part of the East Aurora community for over 22 years, and I want to make sure our kids know that you can always do anything if you set your mind to it."

Educational service personnel: Brittany Bailey-Cole, paraprofessional, Geneva High. "As a paraprofessional, I'm in some classes to work with specific students, but I never single those students out. I always try to help any student that needs help in the classroom."

Private/parochial school: Peggy Veltri, social studies/English, Elgin Academy. "I like to give the kids a lot of opportunities to write for different audiences. If my students can communicate their ideas clearly to others, that can make a huge difference in the rest of their lives."

Regional Superintendent Award: Lisa Dandre, assistant principal, St. Charles East High School. "Meaningful relationships are what I believe in. If you can make students feel comfortable, you will see their best self, and then you can meet them where they're at and take them as far as you can take them."

Organizers also honored 127 retiring educators collectively representing more than 3,800 years experience.

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Elgin gallery displaying artwork by U-46 special needs students

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY

Artwork by students from Center House, an Elgin Area School District U-46 program teaching life and job skills to students with special needs, will be on display starting Monday at the ArtSpace gallery in downtown Elgin.

Students will kick off the weeklong display with a celebration from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday, at ArtSpace Elgin, 51 S. Spring St.

The exhibit is the culmination of a yearlong art project Center House completed in association with the Gail Borden Public Library and ArtSpace.

"A public art display gives our community a place to celebrate the creativity of these young adults from Center House and their contribution to our lives," said Leatrice Satterwhite, U-46's director of specialized student services. "Meanwhile, students learn about producing pieces for an art show, meeting deadlines and choosing their best work."

Center House helps special education students 18 or older who have completed four years of high school. The transitional program prepares them to be active, contributing members of their communities. Students learn how to maximize their potential in practical areas, such as job development and independent living. They also are exposed to recreational choices, leisure activities and hobbies.

Students with disabilities often need direct instruction to develop and experience hobbies. Creating art is a leisure activity that is personal and easily accessible to all, said Jay Walsh, a transition teacher for specialized student services

"Many students with special needs have a unique view of color that comes out in their artwork," Walsh said. "Some people with special needs have even used art to create entrepreneurial vocations in their adult lives. Our students are always excited to see their work displayed, and it helps build self esteem and personal value around this culminating event."

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U-46's Center House students host artists reception for show opening May 7

SUBMITTED BY ELGIN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT U-46

Elgin Area School District U-46 invites the community to an artists reception with students from Center House from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday, May 7, at the Elgin ArtSpace gallery, 51 S. Spring St. in downtown Elgin.

The program teaches life and job skills to students with special needs.

This event kicks off a week-long display of Center House student work. It culminates a yearlong art project Center House completed in association with the Gail Borden Public Library and ArtSpace.

"A public art display gives our community a place to celebrate the creativity of these young adults from Center House and their contribution to our lives," said Dr. Leatrice Satterwhite, U-46's Director of Specialized Student Services. "Meanwhile, students learn about producing pieces for an art show, meeting deadlines and choosing their best work."

Students with disabilities often need direct instruction to develop and experience hobbies, beyond electronic entertainment, according to Jay Walsh, a transition teacher for Specialized Student Services.

Producing art, he noted, is one leisure time activity that is personal and easily accessible to all.

"Many students with special needs have a unique view of color that comes out in their artwork," Walsh said. "Some people with special needs have even used art to create entrepreneurial vocations in their adult lives. Our students are always excited to see their work displayed, and it helps build self esteem and personal value around this culminating event."

Center House helps special education students who are at least 18 and have completed four years of high school by preparing them for the transition to become active, contributing members of the community through real-life programs.

Center House students learn how to maximize their potential in practical areas, like job development and independent living, and they also are exposed to recreation choices, as well leisure and hobby activities, like art.

The kickoff of this year's installment should provide some excellent visual opportunities as students show off and explain their projects.