

Press Clippings 04/18/2019

---The Daily Herald---04/18/2019

U-46 Latino students to receive scholarships Saturday

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy

More than 20 Elgin Area School District U-46 high school seniors will be honored during Club Guadalupano's annual Latino Awards Banquet Saturday at the Grand Victoria Casino in Elgin.

This is the club's 42nd year of awarding scholarships to U-46 students -- the first Latino Awards Banquet began in 1977 with scholarships available exclusively to graduating high school seniors.

This year, the Club Guadalupano Scholarship Committee reviewed 66 applications before selecting 23 recipients based on academic excellence, school and community involvement, and personal essays.

"We're excited to once again celebrate some of our amazing students for their exemplary academic performance and service," U-46 CEO Tony Sanders said. "We join their parents, teachers and local community leaders in commending these students."

Twenty-one students from the district's five high schools will receive a Zoilo Santiago Memorial Award for Academic Achievement, named in honor of the late U-46 bilingual teacher whose commitment to the community went beyond the classroom.

Students receiving scholarships include:

- Bartlett High School -- German Acevedo, Denise Valdez, Jasmine Méndez, Rey Gordino, Jacqueline Zarate
- Elgin High School -- Guadalupe Chávez, Vanessa Róbelo, Weyne Berduo
- Larkin High School -- Caroline Chwalisz, Maritza Rentería, Lesley Pozos, Carlos Toledo, Elisa Arce, Jair Núñez
- South Elgin High School -- Mackenzie Molina, Maritza Pitones
- Streamwood High School -- Karina Adán, Diego Castillo, Christian González, Kiara Kerkoofs, Edgar Gasca

Arce will receive the William Castillo Memorial Award for School and Community Service, named after a former U-46 school board member who was the first Hispanic elected to public service in the area and former president of Centro de Información.

Elgin Community College also will award ECC Foundation scholarships to Zarate and Castillo, and ECC trustee scholarships to Núñez and Gasca.

Tickets to the banquet are \$60 per person. Social hour begins at 6 p.m. followed by the banquet at 7 p.m.

Abbott Middle School places 4th in division at Science Olympiad State Finals

By: Diane P. Harty



"Team Abbott" from Abbott Middle School in Elgin came in fourth overall in their division at the Illinois State Science Olympiad Finals April 13.

It was a day of scientific victories at the Illinois State Science Olympiad Finals held at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana.

Fifty middle schools and 50 high schools came together at U of I to compete in the Olympic Games of Science.

Varsity teams competed in 23 different scientific events and junior varsity teams competed in five trial scientific events.

Elgin Area School District U-46 was represented by Abbott Middle School in Elgin, Canton Middle School in Streamwood, and Eastview Middle School in Bartlett.

All three middle schools reigned triumphant and won a bid to state at the regional competition held at Rock Valley Community College in March.

However, it was "Team Abbott" that conquered and placed fourth overall in their division at the Illinois State Finals on April 13.

"Team Abbott," with 23 dedicated seventh- and eighth-graders and three coaches, has been working tirelessly for the past 7 months preparing to compete.

In the end, "Team Abbott" won medals in eight of 23 varsity events (including two first-place medals) and two of the five junior varsity events. This led to their fourth place ranking in the division.

In Abbott's six-year history in the Science Olympiad, this is the second time to state, but the first time ever placing in the top five schools of their division!

Elgin Area School District U-46, Abbott, Canton, and Eastview couldn't be more proud of all their victorious "Science Olympians!" It's a great day for science!

---Kane County Connects---04/18/2019

#EOTY44 Week 1: meet 12 inspiring educators from St. Charles 303 and District U-46

By: Matt Muntner

- *For the 44th annual Educator of the Year ceremony, 36 nominees will be honored in a Marvel/Avengers themed event on May 3 at the Q Center in St. Charles. Follow the excitement on social media using #EOTY44. Tickets for the event can be purchased by contacting your local school district office or contacting the Kane County ROE.*

It's Week 1 of #EOTY44! We begin this three-week series with 12 amazing educators within Kane County to kick off the Educator of the Year fun and excitement.

Below you will find nominees from **St. Charles District 303**, and **District U-46** — teachers, administrators and support staff who have been nominated and recognized as leaders in their education-related fields by their students, colleagues and supervisors.



Sandra Borgstrom from St. Charles East High School – Nominated for Student Support Personnel of the Year

Sandra Borgstrom represents the best of all D303 seeks to embody: passion, commitment, and a student-first focus doing whatever is needed on behalf of a student.

Beyond St. Charles East High School, Borgstrom is instrumental in the district's planning and delivery of parent information that is beneficial to supporting students at home. Students and staff approach Borgstrom for support, hope, and simply encouragement to ensure everyone does their best work.

“The ways teachers work with students are inspiring to me as they’re always looking for new ways to engage with students,” Borgstrom said. “When you take a step back, you realize that everyone is doing their part in making the students’ lives a lot easier.”



Karen Kobler from St. Charles East High School – Nominated for Educational Service Personnel of the Year

Karen Kobler wears many hats at East – program designer, event planner, calendar manager, ticket seller, student advocate, club coordinator and service project leader.

Students learn life lessons from Kobler, and she models giving back to the community. She is not a problem admirer, but someone who comes up with solutions and focuses on what can be done for students, teacher, parents and her fellow support staff members each day.

“I enjoy where I work and I have a philosophy to be the person that I would want to work with”, Kobler said. “It’s great to see the students evolve over the years as they come into the office with a more delightful mindset and I feel like I was able to help change that.”



Anthony Cerqua from St. Charles East High School – Nominated for Early Career Educator of the Year

Anthony Cerqua has dedicated a tremendous amount of his personal time toward the successful implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards as a member of the Curriculum Design Team.

Cerqua makes his classes fun with the addition of “Keepin it Real Physics Phridays” and other “geeky” characters and references throughout his instructional materials. His students relate to him and enjoy his classes.

“One thing I really like to drive home with the students is the scientific engineering practices,” he said. “That is something I’ve really attached to in my teaching as it’s a practice that can be transferable to other subjects and in their day-to-day lives.”



Deanna Benson-Bressler from St. Charles North High School – Nominated for Educational Service Personnel of the Year

Whether through identifying books to enhance a student’s interest, building a cart with titles to complement a teacher’s curriculum, or talking a student through a technology challenge, Deanna Benson-Bressler is ready to assist.

Benson-Bressler continues to make herself available to students to provide ideas and solutions to their educational needs. She is knowledgeable in her field and has worked hard to supplement their knowledge over the years, but more importantly, she has a genuine concern for every student who enters the LRC.

“One of the things I really strive students to learn is the Dewey Decimal System,” she said. “I feel like if students are able to understand that then they should be able to conquer anything in the world!”



Tanis Samoncelli from St. Charles North High School – Nominated for Student Support Personnel of the Year

Tanis Samoncelli’s patience, passion and perseverance disarms feelings of frustration and confusion. While exploring new tools and increasing the role of technology can be intimidating, Samoncelli works side-by-side with teachers to expand their understanding and build confidence.

Samoncelli will always make herself available to meet with staff and students to help them find new and different approaches to instruction, learning, office work, presentations any anything else that can be improved.

“We need to take a step back and think of the good we can do with all of our social media platforms,” she said. “Just because 5 percent is bad, doesn’t mean the other 95% of good should be missed and I make sure to focus on the good over the bad.”



Denise Leatherman from St. Charles Norther High School – Nominated for High School Teacher of the Year

In the classroom, Denise Leatherman strives to create lessons that promote life learning through projects or activities that are authentic, require students to make connections to the world or work and develop soft-skills when working collaboratively or interviewing.

Lifelong learner is one way to define Leatherman. She eagerly participates in courses in the district and beyond, focused on strategies to expand her instructional influence and establish cultures of learning within her classrooms.

“One of the thought methods I push across is how to prepare my students for the real world and how to balance life in general,” she said. “I am able to equate what I have on my plate as an adult to where they are at the student level and how to prepare for the next step.”



Stephen Morrill from Thompson Middle School – Nominated for School Administrator of the Year

It cannot be overstated that Stephen Morrill has a unique charisma that is contagious and influential. His core values and personality help support an environment where people feel appreciated, encouraged, and free to take risks that lead to improvement and enhanced student learning.

Morrill is without doubt a “top-notch” educator who is a role model for his friends, colleagues, and students. I would describe his reputation as one who “talks the talk and walks the walk.”

“Middle School is a societal secret because if you’re not here, people in the real work think there is no way I would want to spend time at that level,” he said. “More times than not, Middle School (years) were the most challenging times in your life, and we help grow their freedom and give them a longer leash. The teachers here really help facilitate that.”



James Kidston from Elgin Academy – Nominated for Private/Parochial of the Year

As Elgin Academy’s unofficial tech guru, James Kidston works with everyone on campus to improve the school’s technical abilities both inside and out.

Kidston’s collaboration with his fellow faculty members is endless. he explained his eagerness to collaborate this way:

“I hate not knowing,” he said. “I hate teaching something that I don’t fully understand, so I work with teachers to learn what I don’t know.”

All of his thoughtful teaching is even more impressive when you consider the fact that Computer Science hardly existed when he was in college.

“I’m proud every single time one of my students figure something out which they do regularly.” he said. “I figure the more the students figure out for themselves the better which is why my teaching method is to give them the bare minimum and work for it themselves.”



Lisa Mueller from Fox Meadow Elementary – Nominated for Elementary Teacher of the Year

Lisa Mueller works with students in grades K-6 daily and holds several key leadership roles within our building.

There are many qualities that assist Mueller in serving our students and staff excellently each day, including willingness to participate in extra-curricular work to assist students, organization and timelessness of communication with students, staff and parents, a focus on building-wide improvement, and leadership among colleagues throughout the district.

“My goal is to make sure my students love coming to school each and every day,” she said. “I like to build their successes and then move those to different applications and callback on previous success stories.”



Karen Osborne from Fox Meadow Elementary – Nominated for Student Support Personnel of the Year

Karen Osborne’s generous donation of time allows her to be in the classrooms on a daily basis so that students don’t see her as “the school counselor” but rather “the lady who can help you.”

Teachers in the building respect Osborne and her expertise on issues that confront students daily. She never turns anyone away, and always makes students feel as if they are the most important person in that minute, because to her, they are.

“The bottom line is that we’re here to help kids and sometimes they don’t have anyone else who can help them,” she said. “If you chose a classroom of 25 students and focused on one kid per week and called their family and said how great they were doing, nothing bad, then that would only take 25 weeks to make a change within a classroom.”



Lindsey Reynolds from Huff Elementary – Nominated for Student Support Personnel of the Year

Lindsey Reynolds’ passion for her students doesn’t end when the school day ends. She is the coordinator and head coach for School District U-46’s Special Olympics team “The BlueStars.”

Reynolds always has a smile on her face and can easily establish a rapport with her students, their parents, and school staff including teachers, para educators, other support personnel and custodians. She is always prepared, organized and works tirelessly in her efforts to transfer knowledge into practice.

“When I see things get tough for the kiddos, I realize that I am able to take that challenge on,” she said. “If we’re working on something challenging, in those moments, being able to laugh in those moments, having the trust of the kiddos really help make their days better.”



Patricia Briones from School District U-46 – Nominated for Educational Service Personnel of the Year

Patricia Briones is an exceptional member of the U-46 team charged with supporting families and children identified in need of support via the McKinney-Vento act.

Briones works tirelessly to support families by providing resources and direction to acquire transportation, housing, clothing, food and supplies. Co-workers say she exemplifies all the qualities of a leader among educational support personnel: She is responsible, committed, creative, caring, empathetic, and hard working.

“I try to make myself approachable in many ways and give the student the respect that everyone deserves,” Briones said. “It’s a tough job because it’s not all easy, but I just want everyone to be successful and it’s rewarding to help those who deserve a chance.”

---Journal-Topics---04/18/2019

West Leyden Welcomes New Principal Next Year

By: Sean McNealy



Tatiana Bonuma, principal at West Leyden, Beth Concannon, assistant superintendent, and Patricia Makishima, future West principal, at a meet and greet held to introduce Makishima to faculty and staff.

Patricia Makishima has been named the next principal of West Leyden High School in Northlake.

Makishima will officially start on July 1, when she begins a period of mentoring with current principal and former colleague Tatiana Bonuma. The women worked together at Larkin High School in Elgin when Makishima served as a lead teacher in the English as a Second Language department, and Bonuma was her supervisor.

Makishima is currently the coordinator of English Language Learners initiatives for Elgin School District U-46. She said the more she looked into Leyden, the more she liked it.

“The community service, the leadership, the culture, the commitment to the students and families — it speaks to who I am,” Makishima said. “We have the same value system and beliefs and I see that in the teachers, staff and administrators I’ve met.”

Makishima obtained an undergraduate degree in English language and English/American literature from the Universidade de São Paulo in Brazil. She earned a master’s degree and ESL/Bilingual endorsement from Aurora University. In addition to English, she is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese.

Bonuma, who served as a reference for Makishima, says the future principal is dedicated to supporting students and teachers.

“Her rich experience with ELL students, curriculum career pathways and formalize new supports for students,” Bonuma said. “She will be able to contribute immediately to conversations about developing confident problem solvers through relevant experiences.”

Superintendent Nick Polyak says Makishima has a “calm professionalism” that was immediately evident.

“She is a brilliant educational leader and a tireless advocate for students and staff,” Polyak said. “Her experiences and passion for working with students, parents and community members will be important to the work we are continuing at West Leyden.”

Makishima, who is married and the mother of three sons, says her goal is “to continue with the growth established under the current leadership, and to get to know the staff, students, parents and community members so we can work together to benefit the students.”

She added the students’ best interests are her priority.

“I want to ignite the flame in the kids, and guide them to be independent, innovative learners,” she said.