

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

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ASE teacher Kaspar wins ExCEL Award

Arlon Seay Elementary kindergarten teacher Rachel Kaspar knows she makes a difference in the lives of her students.

She's seen examples time and time again over the course of her 10-year teaching career.

Kaspar was named Comal ISD's KENS5 Golden Apple ExCEL Award winner in a ceremony at her campus on Nov. 10. More than 400 of the school's students, Comal ISD superintendent Dr. Marc Walker, other district administrators, and members of Kaspar's family attended the ceremony.

On stage with KENS5 cameras rolling, Kaspar received the "Golden Apple" award and was surprised when award co-sponsor San Antonio Credit Union presented her with a check for \$1,000.

"I'm in total shock right now," Kaspar said. "There are so many deserving teachers in this school and this district. I feel truly feel blessed to win this honor."

Arlon Seay Elementary principal Dr. Judy Murray said she wasn't surprised Kaspar was selected.

"Rachel is a wonderful teacher who has a special bond with her children," Murray said. "She was born to teach. We are very lucky to have her on this campus."

Kaspar said the desire to become a teacher was born at an early age.

"My fourth grade teacher Mrs. Rigby knew how to connect with children," Kaspar said. "She loved every one of us no matter our shortcomings and it showed. 'I can't,' were words we knew to never say around her."

It was soon after the school year began that Kaspar began a trek down the life path she remains on to this day.

"That year, Mrs. Rigby recognized a gift in me," Kaspar said. "She asked me to become a peer tutor. I accepted with trepidation, thinking I could not

possibly have anything to offer my peers. However, I learned to find true joy in seeing the light bulb come on in my peers.”

The fact that Kaspar chose the correct career was reaffirmed during her first year out of college.

“I had a 6-year old student, Beau, who was repeating kindergarten,” she said. “He came from a very disadvantaged family who struggled to keep their farm alive. Beau was a working child. He had no time for reading. He felt like a failure at age six, having decided he would never read or write.”

A chance occurrence during class one day changed two lives forever.

“Beau and I connected one day when he drew a picture of himself on a tractor,” Kaspar said. “Beau, embarrassed, showed me his picture and said, ‘It’s not very good.’ I asked him to tell me about it. He took a deep breath and spilled out, ‘It’s a poop spreader.’ I wrote, ‘It’s a poop spreader,’ at the bottom of his picture. His grin was priceless. I asked Beau to read his words with me. He did. Beau became a reader. I became a teacher.”

KENS5 will air footage of Kaspar teaching and receiving her award during its newscast on Thursday, Nov. 12, at 6 p.m. It will re-air sometime between 7:30-9 a.m., on the Saturday morning newscast.

Congratulations are also in order for the other 13 Comal ISD KENS5 Golden Apple ExCEL Award nominees. They are Lynn Hefner (OCES), Betty Jones (FES), Denise Ayala (GFES), Sarah Culpepper (RBES), James Orth (HLES), Carolyn Ckudre (BBES), Jennifer Johnson (RCES), Lisa Batey (CES), Amy Lundquist (MES), Vickie Millican (JRES), Elaine Eickenroht (SES), Jennifer White (TPES), and Mary Silvers (STZES).

Next year, the award will go to a secondary-level teacher. Last year’s winner was Smithson Valley High’s Stephanie Johns.

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IN PHOTOS:

ASE kindergarten teacher Rachel Kaspar receives the KENS5 Golden Apple ExCEL Award from KENS5’s Deborah Knapp.

KENS5 Golden Apple ExCEL Award winner Rachel Kaspar assists kindergarten student Heaven Goodwin with a math assignment as Comal ISD superintendent Dr. Marc Walker looks on.