

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

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Comal ISD names teachers, support personnel of the year

At the district's annual employee recognition banquet held on April 28 at Smithson Valley Middle, four Comal ISD employees were surprised through the district's teacher and support personnel of the year programs.

Every year, Comal ISD recognizes one elementary and one secondary teacher of the year who are chosen from 24 campus nominees through the annual Teacher of the Year program. This year, for the first time, one campus support personnel employee and one support services employee were also honored through the district's Support Personnel of the Year awards program.

Mt. Valley Middle School's general education associate Katy Lewis was selected as Comal ISD's 2010 Campus Support Personnel of the Year.

Lewis said she believes matching the needs of teachers and students with available resources best describes her job.

"I love my job," said Lewis. "I feel very lucky to work at Mt. Valley Middle, and I am very blessed with a staff that is caring and wonderful to work with. I also love the wide range of activities that I get to participate in with the students and teachers."

Comal ISD's transportation dispatcher in the hill country for the Smithson Valley High School feeder pattern, Stephanie Cichon, was chosen as the district's 2010 Support Services Support Personnel of the Year.

It didn't take long for Cichon's new supervisor to understand how valuable she is to the district.

"I have only been with Comal ISD for three months, but I have already figured out who the integral cog in transportation's 'machine' is," said Brian Gibson. "Stephanie's loyalty, dedication, organization, knowledge and personality make her irreplaceable."

The Campus Support Personnel of the Year finalists were Deena Springer (Rahe Bulverde Elementary) and Juanita Gattelle (Specht Elementary). The Support Services Support Personnel of the Year finalists were Marion Nelson (Child Nutrition) and Dannette Young (Curriculum and Instruction).

Goodwin Frazier Elementary School's art teacher Edyta Ellison was selected as the district's 2010 Elementary Teacher of the Year.

Ellison said her mother was one of her first teaching role models.

"I used to spend a lot of time watching her in the classroom and at home," Ellison said. "She would grade assignments, write lesson plans, create activities, organize field trips and tutor at-risk students. Her relentless energy and constant involvement in her students' lives gave me a clear understanding of the passion and dedication required to teach."

Canyon Middle School's science department chair and pre-AP and regular eighth grade science teacher Hanna Brown was selected as the district's Secondary Teacher of the Year.

Brown is a product of Comal ISD schools and graduated from Canyon High School in 2002.

"I am not someone who always wanted to be a teacher," Brown said. "My mother is a teacher, and growing up, I saw her endless hours of work, grading papers and tears. It was not until my student teaching experience that I fell in love with teaching and knew this was the job I was going to do for the rest of my life."

Both Brown and Ellison will advance as the Comal ISD representatives to the Regional Teacher of the Year competition sponsored by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). If either or both are chosen at the regional level, they will advance to the State Teacher of the Year program.

The elementary campus teachers of the year were Betty Valadez (BBES), Lisa Batey (CES), Berry Jones (FES), Nicola Mundschau (HLES), Vickie Millican (JRES), Pamela Vernon (MES), Lynn Hefner (OCES), Jennifer Klar (RBES), Diana Riepe (RCES), Kim Lyssy (ASE), Elaine Eichenroht (SES), Reagan Tunstall (STZES) and Marcia Pittman (TPES).

The secondary campus teachers of the year are Stephanie Quinn (CHMS), Debbie Bumgardner (MVMS), Cynthia Pike (SVMS), Olivia Garza (SBMS), Larry Anderson (CHS), Suzanne Schule (CLHS), Cynthia Moore (MHS), Lori Niles (SVHS) and Kevin Howell (CDC).

All 24 campus teachers of the year and the six support personnel of the year finalists received Comal ISD goodie bags along with a special plaque and a \$100 American Express gift certificate. In addition to those prizes, Brown, Ellison, Lewis and Cichon received a certificate from Comal ISD, a \$500 gift card from GVTC, and a \$125 check from the Comal Education Foundation.

GVTC's public relations director Ola Armstrong presented the honorees with the \$500 gift cards.

"It has been such a pleasure working with Comal ISD," said Armstrong. "We are so proud to honor these wonderful employees with a small token of our appreciation for what they do for our students every day."

Comal Education Foundation president Carlene Comer was also present to honor the winners with a \$125 check from the foundation.

"The CEF is proud to be a part of the employee banquet," Comer said. "We strive to support education excellence in our district with our mission of enriching learning, expanding opportunities, and helping provide an environment so all students can excel. Through generous community support we are able to give the winners of the Teacher of the Year and the Support Personnel of the year award a token of our appreciation for their dedication to the children of Comal ISD."

Although the support personnel and teacher of the year awards were a big highlight from the April 28 event, there were other many employees honored as well. Each employee who has served Comal ISD for five, 10, 15, 20, 25 or 30 years received a service pin from the superintendent and school board for their commitment to education and to Comal ISD.

"It's so great when we get to see all of our employees together on a fun evening like this," said Comal ISD school board president Carol Kendall Keller. "We are so honored to have such committed and hard working employees serving our students and community. We owe them so much more than just one night of recognition for all they do. On behalf of the school board, we would like to congratulate and thank all of our honorees from our awards event for making a difference in Comal ISD."

There were 35 retirees on the list of honorees in addition to the service recipients who received a framed certificate and a pin. Comal ISD Superintendent Dr. Marc Walker congratulated all of the retirees.

"Thank you for your service and commitment to Comal ISD," said Walker. "You have all left a legacy in this district. And while we will continue to

hire people to carry on that legacy, we will never be able to replace you. Although we wish you the best in your retirement, always know that your efforts are appreciated and that you will be missed.”

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IN PHOTOS:

TOY:

Goodwin Frazier Elementary art teacher Edyta Ellison and Canyon Middle science teacher Hanna Brown were named Comal ISD teachers of the year for the 2009-10 school year. Pictured are (l-r) GVTC public relations director Ola Armstrong, Ellison, Brown and Comal Education Foundation president Carlene Comer.

SPOY:

Mt. Valley Middle School's general education associate Katy Lewis was selected as Comal ISD's 2010 Campus Support Personnel of the Year and Stephanie Cichon, was chosen as the district's 2010 Support Services Support Personnel of the Year. Pictured (l-r) are GVTC public relations director Ola Armstrong, Lewis, Cichon, Comal Education Foundation president Carlene Comer, and Comal ISD superintendent Dr. Marc Walker.