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NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

32nd Annual Appreciation Luncheon Honors Outstanding School Volunteers, Mentors, Teachers & Partners in Education

Pensacola, FL: Escambia School District leaders gathered Apr. 21, at New World Landing to honor many of the people and businesses who support local schools as volunteers and business partners. In addition, the luncheon included school administrators, school volunteer coordinators and this year's Teachers of the Year. Every school was represented and each brought along three Volunteers of the Year – a Youth Volunteer, an Adult Volunteer and a Senior Volunteer – and their Business Partner of the Year. The event was led by Marty Stanovich, Executive Director, The First Tee of NW Florida, and a long time supporter of Escambia County kids and public schools.

Business Partners

The District took this opportunity to acknowledge many businesses for their support of district-wide initiatives. An example is the over 30 year partnership between the school district and the Center for Information Dominance at Corry Field who have operated the Navy's longest running, continuous Saturday Scholars Program. Fifty ECSD students are paired with a military mentor for 5 weeks and participate in hands-on Math, Science, Engineering activities as well as some time to play together outside. Each spring and fall semester a different school gets their turn to participate and, while the name of the command may change, the military partner has always come from Corry Field.

Representatives from many district business partners were represented at the luncheon to include: Members First Credit Union, Office Depot, Newks, MetLife Resources, Wells Fargo, Northwest Florida League of Southeastern Credit Unions, and last but not least, Pen Air Federal Credit Union and Navy Federal Credit Union. A special acknowledgement went to Stone Studio for years of photographic support of District recognition activities.

Stanovich told the room, "Take a look around the room; we have almost 500 exceptional people here that are truly invested in educating our children. Collectively, we can improve the lives of children, one at a time. Whether you are an administrator, a volunteer coordinator, a mentor, a volunteer, a teacher or a business partner, you have made a commitment to our schools and the children of Escambia County. You may never know the impact you make on the lives that you touch, but we all remember an adult in our lives that had a positive impact on us and you just may be that someone. Sometimes, the task seems too large, but know, you are appreciated and "you mean the world to us!"

Outstanding Partnership Awards

District Partner of the Year: ECSD recognized the Sandy Sansing Foundation, a partner that so generously and continuously supports education in our county, as this year's District Partner of the Year. Earlier this year, The Sansing family donated \$100,000 for the district to use over two years for science and computer technology training and education. David Sansing accepted the honor on behalf of his family.

School Based Partner: ECSD also recognized the Children's Home Society as the School Based Partner of the Year. Represented by Tim Putman and Leigh Ann South, they were selected for leading the charge to help establish the first "Community School" in Escambia County on the campus of C.A. Weis Elementary a CommUNITY School. As a community school, Weis will be able to serve more than the educational needs of the neighborhood. It will house resources such as a medical clinic, mental health support, food pantry, summer activities, a community playground, a clothing closet, the list is extensive and it has already gained the support of many organizations in our county.

2016 ECSD's Outstanding Volunteer Recognition

Each year, the school district selects an outstanding Senior, Adult and Youth Volunteer of the Year. These are then forwarded to the State Board of Education and compete for the region and state volunteer of the year.

Student Volunteer of the Year: Grant Gill is an eighth grade student at Ransom Middle School and volunteers at L.D. McArthur Elementary. Over the past 3 years, Grant has started his day two hours early every day before catching his bus to Ransom. He volunteers with a very special population, Miss Jansen's pre-K class for students with Autism. He starts out by greeting the students at their bus and assisting them to their classroom to unpack and prepare for the day. He helps in the cafeteria with their breakfast and returns with them to their class.

"Grant has one special boy who has become very attached to him. Dorian and his mom are here today to celebrate Grant's award," Stanovich said. "The two are inseparable and his mother is so very grateful for the work he has done for her special little boy. Grant says he may pursue a career in teaching special education."

Sue Straughn, with WEAR Channel Three, will be spotlighting Grant next week as her *Angels in our Midst* feature. (Tune in on Monday, April 25th at 6 p.m., or Tuesday April 26th, 6:15 a.m. It will be posted on WEAR's website late Monday night under the "Angels" tab.)

Adult Volunteer of the Year: The 2016 Adult Volunteer of the Year is Brandie Johnson from Beulah Elementary School. She has been volunteering at Beulah Elementary for the past two years. In that time, she has established herself as a very reliable, self-motivated and well-liked volunteer and Parent Educator. She works nearly 20 hours per week assisting teachers in classrooms with students and administrative tasks. The rest of the week, she spends time volunteering each day, and even before school starts and after students have left. She maintains bulletin boards throughout the school, and makes endless copies for teachers, office and staff administrators. She also serves as the PTA Membership officer, and membership has never been higher. She is also a Member of the School Advisory Council, participating in budgetary decisions. Johnson is also committed to raising funds for Beulah. She sets up monthly events that have raised nearly \$600 every month for the purchase of Chrome Books for the students.

Senior Volunteer of the Year: This year's ECSD Senior Volunteer of the Year, Mr. Charlie Dickin has also been chosen as the State DOE's Region One Volunteer of the Year. Nominated by Blue Angels Elementary School, Mr. Charlie, is adored by everyone at his school. To quote from his nomination, "Mr. Charlie Dickin should have his own office, his own mailbox, and his own e-mail address at Blue Angels Elementary School! He is on campus before many others, starting his day assisting the car rider line to keep traffic moving smoothly and getting students out of cars and into the building safely. When his work in the car rider line is finished, Mr. Charlie heads to the front office to address any outstanding maintenance requests that he can complete until district help arrives, often saving a district trip altogether." Mr. Charlie coordinates the many other volunteers on campus. As a military man, he understands that some of their young military volunteers are homesick and need a friend. He has been known to share a lunch, smile or give a pat on the back with those that serve our country. He also works with teachers, staff, students, parents, military and the community to do his best to make Blue Angels Elementary such a great school. He affectionately calls EVERYONE, "Charlie's Angels". He has volunteered at Blue Angels for six years and have given over 12,400 hours of service to the school. Charlie Dickin is an outstanding parent, grandparent, military man, and community servant.

Teachers of the Year

Recently selected as Escambia County's new Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Kristy Imhof, a seventh-grade language arts teacher at Ransom Middle School led the gathering in a round of applause to thank all of this year's Teachers of the Year.

Community Involvement Award

Each year, the Florida Department of Education also recognizes an outstanding Family and Community Involvement program in each county. This year we are recognizing West Pensacola Elementary for their Tech P.A.S.S. Tuesdays Program. Tech P.A.S.S. was started by the school to create a program that would give parents a chance to learn more about how to use their student's school-issued Chrome book at home. The one hour courses are designed to help families with basic computer applications, in addition to helping with more advanced software available. They are taught to use the Chrome book for practical applications such as banking and health related issues. This program has been well attended and very positive. Families have become more involved in the student's education and this carries over to their success in the classroom. Principal Sabrena Cunningham and Assistant Principal, Laurie Cothran, were on hand to accept the award.

New Florida Association of Partners in Education, Community Engagement Volunteer Award

The State Department of Education along with State Farm created a new award this year to honor an outstanding Community Engagement program. Escambia County has submitted a very special program for this award, the Myrtle Grove Elementary and Escambia High School School-to-School Early Literacy Initiative. Myrtle Grove's Principal Robin Maloy, accepted the award along with Dawn Morris from Myrtle Grove, and Principal Frank Murphy, from Escambia High School.

This program has truly been inspirational to the students, faculty and staff of both schools. It began several years ago with high school student mentors reading to elementary students once a week to promote early literacy. It has blossomed into a partnership for learning, with constant communication and collaboration between the schools. Football players, cheerleaders, Student Government officers and even the EHS Culinary Arts students have contributed time and talent in the classrooms and during special events such as Family Literacy Nights and Dr. Seuss's birthday. It is truly a win-win for everyone involved. This partnership was featured on WEAR TV as an Angels in our Midst Feature in September 2015. Follow this link to see it: <http://weartv.com/angels-in-our-midst-escambia-high-football-players-giving-back>

School Awards

The **Golden School Awards** are presented by the Commissioner of Education, to those elementary schools who satisfy a list of criteria. Schools must have volunteer training for their staff, assign a staff volunteer coordinator, and have accumulated volunteer hours which equal twice the number of students enrolled at the school. Twenty-four (24) ECSD schools have received the Golden School Award for the past 30 consecutive years or more. Ten schools have passed the thirty-five (35) year mark. They are: Cordova Park, Longleaf, Pine Meadow, Pleasant Grove, Beulah, Bratt, L.D. McArthur, Myrtle Grove, Sherwood and West Pensacola Elementary Schools!

The Silver School Award is given to recognize secondary schools and programs whose students provide exemplary volunteer services to elementary and secondary schools, as well as volunteer throughout the community. The composite student volunteer hours must equal at least one-half (1/2) the total number of students in the school. The names of the schools and programs that received the Silver School Awards are: Jim Bailey Middle School and Pensacola, Pine Forest and Booker T. Washington High Schools.

Five Star School Award is the Highest Award given by the State of Florida for Community Involvement. To apply for Five Star Status, schools must complete portfolios about their community involvement, which include very specific information about volunteers, business partners, family involvement and student community service. Additionally, there must be an active and committed School Advisory Council. It is quite something to achieve Five Star Status! This award was established 20 years ago by the Commissioner of Education and this year, we are recognizing 16 schools in Escambia County as Five Star Schools. They are: Jim Allen Elementary, Beulah Elementary, Blue Angels Elementary, Brown-Barge Middle, Hellen Caro Elementary, N. B. Cook School of the Arts, Cordova Park Elementary, Global Learning Academy, R. C. Lipscomb Elementary, Longleaf Elementary, L.D. McArthur Elementary, Molino Park Elementary, Pine Meadow Elementary, Pleasant Grove Elementary, Scenic Heights Elementary, and A.K. Suter Elementary School.

Media queries about any event listed on this release should be directed to Kim Stefansson, at 850-469-6219 or kstefansson@escambia.k12.fl.us.

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