

Golden Acorn and Outstanding Educator Honorees, 2019-2020

Congratulations to our 2019-2020 Golden Acorn and Outstanding Educator Award honorees! The awards committee had very difficult choices to make because there were so many stellar candidates nominated. We truly have an amazing staff and dedicated group of volunteers.

Outstanding Educator Awards 2019-2020

WINNERS

Alexandra Orme, 3rd Grade Teacher

The committee received 29 nominations and 11 of them were for Ms. Orme. She is very warm, kind, caring, and understanding, while at the same time being firm and disciplined. She is also extremely organized, efficient, easy to communicate with, accessible, and welcoming suggestions. "She really goes the extra mile for students with extra needs." She has "an obvious care for our kids." "She celebrates her students' work and the things that bring them joy." "She has been a superstar, and I am deeply grateful for her dedication and ingenuity." Families expressed gratitude that she stayed so connected and worked so hard during distance learning.

Nathan Brown, 5th Grade Teacher

"His dedication and care for his students, their families and the Cascadia community as a whole is evident." "Mr. Brown has been a positive influence as he models diligence, cooperation, clear communication, organization, responsibility, respect and compassion." "Nathan Brown is a great teacher, but he is also a valuable member of the faculty team. Mr. Brown is constantly volunteering for whatever job needs to be done - interview team, student council advisor, iLab coordinator, etc. This spring his willingness to continue to make community meetings has been so touching and encouraging to the Cascadia families. He goes above and beyond, and all families benefit from this." Mr. Brown also really hit the ground running with distance learning.

David Kelley, 4th Grade Teacher (Math and Science)

Mr. Kelley had the challenging task of starting at Cascadia mid-year. He came up to speed lightning fast and was calming, effective, and made his students feel loved. He has “managed to continue educating his new classes with enthusiasm and determination through a difficult time.” “He was always open, connected and available in his communications with families.” “Mr. Kelley invested the time & effort to get to know his students and create meaningful relationships with them.” Parents appreciated that you were very proactive in your distance learning efforts. People are so happy to hear that you will stay at Cascadia next year.

NOMINEES

Anna Baughman, Instrumental Music

“Funny, joyful, and effective.” “Goes above and beyond to explain musical concepts and make learning fun.”

Merrick Bodmer, Librarian

“Merrick is an Outstanding Educator because she goes above and beyond a strict interpretation of a school librarian's duties to serve as an integrative educator in the literal heart of the school. She makes library time fun for the kids and is always thinking about how to enrich the curriculum and link it to what they are learning in the classroom as well as what they need to know in life.” “Well-stocked, well-organized library. Computer literacy and online safety curriculum for all ages. Race, equity, and anti-bullying/social-emotional learning curriculum for all ages. Global reading challenge.”

Jessica Gibbons, 2nd Grade Teacher

“Ms. Gibbons is an incredible asset to the Cascadia community. She goes FAR beyond what is asked of any teacher because she genuinely cares about the success and progression of each of her students. Not only is she challenging her students and ensuring their academic success, but she is creating citizens of this world that we will all be very proud of.”

Charrie Gibson, 4th Grade Teacher

Ms. Gibson is described as "Welcoming. Kind. Patient. Loving. Magical." "Ms. Gibson has super powers. She really "gets" kids and has a great sense of humor. Kids thrive around her; she encourages their creative thinking and special interests."

Kimberley Erickson, 3rd Grade Teacher

Ms. Erickson recognizes that students who are classified as "difficult" need extra help and innovating to provides that help without blame or judgement. She is enthusiastic and caring, and parents appreciated her dynamic and organized distance learning.

Joshua Hill, 5th Grade Teacher

Your teaching partnership with Mr. Brown is recognized as a model of teamwork and cooperation to the extent that some people call you Brown Hill as if you were one person. "Beloved by students and parents, dedicated to the profession and art of teaching." Your diad was up and running fast after the closure with clear structure, expectations, systems, and ways to share class spirit.

Kate Holford, Occupational Therapist

Ms. Holford cares deeply about getting students what they need. She is recognized for heroic efforts to round up assistive technology to send home with a student on the day school shut down with only hours of warning.

Elizabeth Knighton, Instrumental Music

"Ms. Knighton is an organizational mage who makes the formidable logistics of our instrumental music program work very smoothly. She is very kind and positive." Parents appreciated that she helped kids stay engaged during the closure, and helped siblings find music they could play together. She also helped a child with sensory issues choose an instrument that would work well for him.

Camille Paul, Special Education Teacher

Worked with lots of 2E kids, with great kindness, patience, and flexibility. Doing so remotely is even more amazing.

Katie Shae, Office

Your accomplishments for this year were described as "doing everything all the time." "Katie is our Unsung Hero. Officially from the front office, she could (when we were still in the building) be seen everywhere, helping everyone! She loves the kids. She knows all their names, what they like for lunch, which bus they're supposed to be on. She's able to relate to the kids in a low-key way that puts them at ease."

Golden Acorn Awards 2019-2020

WINNER

Megan Hazen

Megan was our PTA President this year. She has also served as Vice President, Communications Chair, Bike to School advocate, and Building Leadership Team representative.

"Megan is warm, kind, approachable, knowledgeable and CALM. When any of the rest of us would have lost it, she remains level headed and proactive. She's a true leader."

"Megan has led the PTA through an extremely difficult year. She has advocated for the needs of gifted and twice exceptional kids. She helped the PTA find our way - how could we best help families during the covid-19 closures? She tried very hard to make all families feel welcome and included. "

"Unceasing advocacy for HCC, her knowledge and sensitivity for 2e children, and now a virus that has shut down our school, Megan has remained present, positive and determined. I can't imagine how many unpaid hours she has put in, and yet she continues to do this difficult work because she's passionate about our kids. Her love for our community is heartfelt."

"She has done a lot to stand up for the rights of neurodivergent kids around the district. I've been impressed with her consistent and thoughtful outreach on behalf of the program, and her relentless advocacy for our students. I also think she was an excellent PTA president, thoughtful and intentional around budgeting and priorities, as a parent I thought she provided excellent leadership for the school.

"She has an excellent rapport with staff and is always willing to lend a helping hand, from offering high-level vision on how the PTA can help the school achieve its goals of supporting learning and community engagement, to small tasks to make life and work a little easier for staff."

People also mentioned their appreciation for the signs in different languages that she made for the school this year, the time she gave to help interview potential staff, and her responsiveness to questions and concerns from new and current families.

FINALISTS

Hee Rae Cho

"Volunteers almost daily at school, working with students, supporting teachers, helping in the lunchroom, library, and creating the yearbook." "This parent seems to live at the school." "Basically if something needs doing, she'll step up and do it."

Becky Dobbins

Becky served as a PTA Co-Secretary this year. Garden/landscaping leader extraordinaire. "Her enthusiasm, friendliness, and initiative are stellar." "Determined, encouraging, tireless, leads by example."

Jolie Nivison

Jolie served as PTA Programs Director this year.

"Jolie wears many hats, bringing inspiring energy and new ideas to all sorts of community-building efforts. Special events and programs have taken a giant leap this year with Jolie's symphonic conducting! She's friendly and welcoming to all, and knows just what needs to be done."