

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #145 (2006-2007)

January 22, 2007

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: FALL 2006 DENALI AWARD RECIPIENTS

*ASD Goal: Establish and maintain a supportive and effective learning environment by continuing to retain, recruit and train highly qualified staff.*

PERTINENT FACTS:

To Alaskans, Denali means "great one," and the Anchorage School District is proud to have employees that display greatness in the areas of achievement, service and dedication. Twice each year, a committee of Anchorage School District employees selects a number of co-workers and a team of colleagues that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to its mission of educating students for success in life. The Denali award is the highest level of recognition a staff member may receive from the district.

The certificated Denali award winner for Fall 2006 is Pam Christianson, a counselor at Ursa Major Elementary School. In her second year as the school's counselor, Pam has already had a significant impact in the school community that has been hit hard by soldier deployments. In a letter of support, teacher Michael Walsh writes, "Every single day, in countless ways, she makes life significantly better for those around her. Those needing counseling, whether adult or child, come away feeling peaceful, and with working strategies to face their challenges." Parents say it's obvious that Pam's heart is in her job and her passion for students as well as her career is easily visible. The school's BPO, Ivan Doucet, calls Pam Ursa Major's own Mary Poppins, because she is the spoon full of sugar that kids need to deal with today's problems.

The support staff members receiving the Denali award are BPOs Alfredo Morales at Tudor Elementary and Percy Williams at Mears Middle School. Known as Mr. Alfredo around school, he makes sure the building is clean and tidy for students and fellow staff members. In his nomination for the award, Principal Michelle Smith writes, "It's obvious that Mr. Morales has a strong work ethic, sees his job as a reflection of him, takes pride in his work, and understands the importance of a well-organized school environment." Other Tudor coworkers say in the past four years that Alfredo has spent at the school, he's always been very positive, hard-working and willing to go the extra

mile. Students even wrote in to support Alfredo's nomination. Here is a little of what they had to say.

- "You're a really good cleaner," from Alec.
- "You are very cool and nice to me," from MaKayla.
- "He says good morning to everyone. He takes out the trash because he is a strong guy and he is a nice guy," from Brenden.
- "Mr. Alfredo is a good and nice man. If we have trouble he is on the double!" from Fatima.
- "I love your work! It is awesome how you clean the cafeteria!" from Daija.

As part of his nomination, students also put together four colorful books of praise for Mr. Alfredo.

Percy Williams, BPO at Mears Middle School is also honored with the Denali award for support staff. Percy has been an ASD employee for 26 years, spending the majority of his years at Mears and Dimond High. Percy's direct supervisor, Principal Michael Perkins says in his 19 years as an educator, he cannot think of any teacher, administrator or support person who has had a more positive influence on the lives of thousands of students in the Anchorage School District. Percy's coworkers say he takes a few moments each day to make the school a great place to work. In a letter of support, student Avery Hudson writes, "I know Percy may not think that he did much, but he has taken time for me and others to help guide us. I think you need to take a bow Percy. I'm slowly getting wiser and I have to thank you for that."

The administrator/principal award goes to East High Assistant Principal Sue Holway for her outstanding contribution to the district. Sue spent more than two decades teaching in ASD classrooms before becoming an administrator three years ago. Sue's job now includes being in charge of dozens of clubs, athletic and academic teams, shows, concerts, assemblies, coaches, directors, sponsors and their various schedules, budgets, fundraising, permitting, bussing and eligibility. Not only is she able to keep track of it all, she makes it easy for others to keep up also. Sue has been a strong advocate for Title IX in all areas of athletics. In addition to help the district become compliant with the law, under her leadership, East High has more girls participating in athletics than boys for the first time ever. In one of several support letters, Scott Thomas, East High's athletic director, writes, "Her enthusiasm is contagious and the students, parents, coaches and staff members of East High are fortunate beyond measure to have her with us. I believe that this award would be fantastic thanks for the unconditional devotion and effort she gives feely each day."

There were several fantastic teams nominated for the Fall 2006 Denali award. Deserving of extra recognition are Susitna Optional Elementary School staff and the IEP Support staff. Last year, seven teachers at Susitna Optional addressed student homelessness in a community outreach project. Students in grades K-6 formed teams and each focused on a particular topic related to homelessness in Anchorage. Teams read books, listened to

guest speakers, made pottery bowls to sell as a fundraiser to help feed homeless children, and held a school-wide benefit concert/celebration. In all, the 175 students involved in the project contributed nearly 2,500 hours of community service. Melissa Mailhiot, Bean's Café Event Coordinator, says some of the funds raised by the school will be used to help feed the community's homeless and hungry population year-round. She also notes that the school's partnership helped "make the essentials of life a reality for the poor." The seven-teacher team that headed the community outreach project was made up of Lucinda Eliason-Jensen, Brittany Bauman, Iris Morton, Julie Graham, Virginia Hughes, Ben Elbow, Ingrid Bodensteiner and David Gillam. Principal Paul Wieneke and the parent group also assisted on the year-long project. The school outreach project was documented in a professional, hard cover book.

The IEP Clerical Support Clerk program is also honored with the Denali team award. The program began five years ago to lighten the special education teachers' paperwork, allowing them to focus on student instruction. Clericals assist with documenting behavior plans, progress reports, scheduling meetings, maintaining and updating databases tracking accommodations and testing, and maintaining and tracking IEP paperwork, dates and deadlines. Since the programs establishment in 2001, the staff has proven to be an integral part of the Special Education department. Muldoon Elementary's Special Ed Department Chair, Penny Seliger, writes of her school's IEP clerical, "Our days get so busy that we some times don't have time enough to stop and think. She (our IEP clerical) is so good about getting in touch with parents and getting meetings set up that if I had to do that, then it would take time away from my students and testing time that I really need. The IEP clericals are so wonderfully trained it would be hard to imagine what life would be without them, but then I don't want to think about that, as I have been with the district 13 years and do remember what life was like without them." Principal Jacqui Gorlick of Nunaka Valley Elementary, is also grateful of the IEP clerk at her school, "Her eye for detail and strong work ethic provides our special education team with accurate and timely contacts, efficient scheduling and written documentation. She shows great pride in building relationships with parents even though she often 'meets' them solely on the telephone. We are very fortunate to have her as a member of our team."

It is requested the School Board recognize Pam Christianson, Alfredo Morales, Percy Williams, Susitna Optional staff and the IEP Clerical Support team for their outstanding work that has made them an asset to the district and the winners of the Fall 2006 Denali awards.

Attachment

CC/ME/HE

Prepared by: Heidi Embley, Senior Communications Specialist

Approved by: Michelle Egan, Director, Communications

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
FALL 2006 DENALI AWARD NOMINEES

Certificated:

Pam Christianson, Ursa Major Elementary\*  
Terri Rosso, Romig Middle  
Rachel Roux, Lake Hood Elementary  
Denise Trujillo, Eagle River High

Classified:

Art Chico, Mt. Spurr Elementary  
Ann LaRue, Goldenview Middle  
Laurie Lingnau, Turnagain Elementary  
Alfredo Morales, Tudor Elementary\*  
Dale Normandin, Training & Professional Development  
Tom Sawyer, Clark Middle  
Percy Williams, Mears Middle\*

Administrator/Principal:

Sue Holway, East High\*

Team:

Gene and Troy, Fire Lake Elementary  
IEP Clerical Support, districtwide\*  
Newcomers' Center, King Career Center  
Science Department Support Teachers, districtwide  
Susitna Optional Elementary staff\*

\*award recipients

Denali Award Nomination Review Committee:

Kathy Griffith, Web Content Specialist  
Todd Hess, Director, Contract Administration  
Susan Okeson, Elementary Principal  
Tamara Rhyner, Administrative Assistant  
Joanna Schultz, Senior, Chugiak High School