District honors students, staff at awards breakfast

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

"A Celebration of Excellence - Superintendent's Awards of Excellence Breakfast" held recently at Glen Oaks Country Club recognized students who exhibited outstanding academic achievement, exemplary citizenship and exceptional involvement in school activities.

Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield used a story offered him by his younger son, Scott, to provide the morning's inspiration. Scott teaches fifth grade in the Lake Orion Public School District.

The story goes that a young man named Nicolai, who was trying to find his place in the world, asked three questions: "When is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do?"

After consulting three friends and enduring a storm, Nicolai finds the answers, which Maxfield summed up.

"Remember, there is only one important time and that time is now," Maxfield said. "The most important one is the one you are with. The most important thing is to do good with the one standing by your side."

This is the foundation for future success, Maxfield said.

Before presenting the awards, he read some excerpts the students wrote about the school staffer they nominated, usually a teacher. They said things like "He made me feel like I measured up.", "She taught me never to shirk my school work and never be afraid to do something different." and "He recognized me as an individual."

Following are the students and the people selected to honor:

- Katya Bachrouche, eighth grade, Warner Middle School Toni Barringer
- Sohail Balasubramanian, senior, Farmington High School, Paula Rohn
- Matt Balla, senior, Harrison High School, social worker Greg Drozdowski
- Jordyn Beckwith, junior, North Farmington High School, Karin Edelson, a Warner Middle School teacher
- Nicholas Bringardner, Power Middle School, Nancy Morris, Williiam Grace Elementary School
- Megan Browning, eighth grade, East Middle School, David Drake
- Rachel Button, junior, Farmington High School, Jeff Danzinger
- Shara Cherniak, senior, North Farmington High School, Carol Kuenzel
- Sarah Eklov, eighth grade, Dunckel Middle School, Steve Koponen
- Netta Golenberg, eighth grade, Dunckel Middle School, Jerry Morrissey
- Chris Haas, junior, Harrison High School, Kevin Miesner
- Elyse Hall, senior, Farmington Alternative High School, Diane Duthie
- Kathy Hass, sophomore, Harrison High School, Sister Evantia, St. Fabian School
- Caela Hesano, eighth grade, Warner Middle School, Tom Seremet
- Pasualina Inderosa, freshman, Farmington High School, Mary Sheltrown
- Danish Javed, sophomore, Farmington High School, Deanna McGraw
- Erica Johnson, eighth grade, East Middle School, Carol Sethi
- Josh Mansfield, eighth grade, Power Middle School, Mary Jo Stewart, Flanders Elementary School
- Erin Matthys, eighth grade, Power Middle School Debbie Calanchi
- Megan McDougall, eighth grade, East Middle School, Michelle Todorov, Lanigan Elementary School
- Joseph McKeon, sophomore, North Farmington High School, Steve Koponen, Dunckel Middle School
- Mark Moundros, freshman, North Farmington High School, Principal Rick Jones
- Jamie Olen, eighth grade, Warner Middle School, Tom Seremet
- Hilary Pietila, eighth grade, Dunckel Middle School, Claudia Doughty
- Alexandria Stankovich, freshman, Harrison High School, Kathy Folske

SET THE BAR HIGH

Board President Linda Enberg urged students to set the bar high with self-discipline and perseverance.

"Each of you has a unique package that you bring to your world," Enberg said. "You are being honored for your internal compass that keeps you on track."

Parents are students' first and best teachers. "Don't forget to thank them," Enberg said. The best indicator of student achievement is involved parents."

Paraphrasing a quote from President John F. Kennedy, she told students, "Much has been given to you and much is needed from you."

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OBITUARIES

Sister Charlita Smith, RSM

Services for Sister Charlita Smith, RSM, 81, Sister of Mercy, were held June 24 at Sacred Heart Chapel with burial at Mt. Oliver's cemetery in Howell.

Sister Charlita died June 20, 2003, at McAuley Retirement Center in Farmington Hills. She was born to her parents, Herman and Mary Smith, on June 26, 1921, and named Monica Josephine at her baptism in St. Joseph's Church in Howell. She graduated from the Howell Public High School in 1939 and in September of that year joined the Sisters of Mercy in Dubuque, Iowa. She became known as Sister Mary Charlita and began a life of dedicated service. She made perpetual vows as a member of the order on Aug. 16, 1945, at the Mercy Provincialate in Detroit.

Sister Charlita completed her studies for a bachelor's degree in arts at Mercy College of Detroit in 1954 and earned a master's degree in education from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh in 1960. Her entire teaching career of 43 years was devoted to elementary education. Children from Remus, Rogers City, Cheboygan, Hazel Park, Lansing, Detroit, Wyoming, Pinconning, Midland and Grand Rapids benefited from her skills as she made learning an interesting and important part of their lives.

When she officially retired from the classroom in 1986, she continued to assist for another eight years as a tutor at Holy Spirit School in Grand Rapids. In 1994, she came to McAuley Center in Farmington Hills.

Sister Charlita is remembered as a joyful, gentle person with many interests and abilities. She excelled in crafts and needlework and shared her work with family and friends. She is especially remembered for her great patience and pence throughout the debilitating illness which deprived her of motion and speech for several years before her death.

Sister Charlita is survived by her sister, Ella Maher; sister-in-law, Frances Smith; and several nieces and nephews as well as her religious community.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Mercy Ministry Fund, 29000 11 Mile Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48336-1405.

Joseph J. Bender Jr.

Services for Joseph J. Bender Jr. 49, of Farmington, were held June 29 at St. Gerald Catholic Church in Farmington with the Rev. John Menner officiating.

Mr. Bender was born Feb. 15, 1954, in Michigan and died June 26, 2003, at Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills. He worked as director of Revenue Integrity for St. Joseph Mercy Hospital-Oakland in Pontiac. He was an assistant scout leader for Troop 179 in Farmington Hills for 15 years and a lecturer, lay minister and greeter at St. Gerald Catholic Church. He enjoyed golfing and camping and was interested in Lighthouse preservation.

He is survived by his wife of 27 years, Diane; sons, Joseph (Christine) and Steven; daughter, Sarah Bender; brothers, Michael (Catherine), Robert (Colleen), Thomas (Annette) and David (Claudia); sister, Susan (Daniel) Monforton; two nephews; and five nieces.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Boy Scouts of America, Clinton Valley Council, P.O. Box 43-1173, Pontiac, MI 48343.

Arrangements made by Thayer-Rock Funeral Home in Farmington.

John J. Casse

Services for John J. Casse, 82, of Macomb, Ill., were held June 27 at St. Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit with burial at Mt. Elliott Cemetery in Detroit.

Mr. Casse was born March 12, 1921, in Detroit and died June 23, 2003, at McDonough District Hospital in Macomb, Ill. He worked for the City of Detroit Water Department for 25 years. He was a member of St. Paul Catholic Church in Macomb, Ill. and St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church in Clearwater, Fla.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Kathleen; daughter Peggy (Larry) Kwacala; grandsons, John and Matthew; sister, Catherine Forest; and two nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his sister Mary Alice Turner and brother, Edward, who died in infancy.

Arrangements made by Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home in Farmington.

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