

Westside Community Schools Announces 2024 Phillip & Terri Schrager Foundation Distinguished Teaching Award Winners

Each year, the Phillip and Terri Schrager Foundation honors two deserving Westside Community Schools educators leading the way in innovation in the classroom. On May 24, Terri Schrager presented the 2024 Schrager Distinguished Teaching Awards to two Westside Community Schools educators: **Julie Carruthers**, kindergarten teacher at Oakdale Elementary, and **Faren Huben**, 8th grade mathematics teacher at Westside Middle School.

JULIE CARRUTHERS Kindergarten Teacher Oakdale Elementary



Julie Carruthers, a Kindergarten Teacher at Oakdale Elementary, is a 2024 Schrager Distinguished Teaching Award recipient.

Carruthers has been teaching and

inspiring Westside students for 17 years; her impact has been felt by countless students and families. Carruthers is widely respected not only in the Oakdale Community but throughout the Westside Community Schools District, as she provides leadership on various committees, and valuable feedback on innovative initiatives in the classroom.

As a kindergarten teacher at Oakdale, Carruthers' effectiveness, creativity, and innovation in teaching enhances the learning experiences of her kindergarten students. Carruthers fosters hands-on learning that helps engage her students. Her focus on effective experiential learning opportunities in the curriculum emphasizes the benefits of hands-on activities for early childhood development. You don't see much "sit and get" learning taking place in Carruthers' class. Students are actively engaged, buzzing around the classroom, and focused on each learning activity.

Playing to her strengths, Carruthers uses creative teaching techniques in her classroom. Utilizing multisensory teaching techniques, such as incorporating music, movement, and visual aids, helps cater to different learning styles and keeps students actively involved.

Carruthers engages students in their own learning and fosters the intellectual development of all students in a kindergarten setting. This requires a combination of effective teaching strategies, a nurturing classroom environment, and supportive relationships. These are all characteristics of Julie Carruthers' classroom.

The most powerful evidence of Carruthers' excellent teaching capabilities can be found in her students. Carruthers provides a nurturing and supportive environment, necessary for young students to find a sense of belonging amongst their peers. The warmth and care she brings to the learning space contribute significantly to the positive experience of our young Westside learners. The love for learning that Julie Carruthers instills in these young minds is truly commendable.

Congratulations to Julie Carruthers, most deserving of this honor as a Phillip and Terri Schrager Distinguished Teaching Award recipient.

FAREN HUBEN Mathematics Teacher Westside Middle School



Faren Huben, Mathematics Teacher at Westside Middle School, is a 2024 Schrager Distinguished Teaching Award recipient.

Huben has been teaching for 11 years at Westside Middle School and is currently the curriculum lead for Math 8. While Huben can be found supporting a variety of programs at WMS from Rubik's Cube Club, to the Athletics Department, to the Washington DC trip, she is best known for teaching 8th grade math and honors math.

Huben has passionately taken math and expertly leaned into the curriculum to provide the best results for her students. Huben brings math to life, through conversation, real-life examples, teamwork, and multi-disciplinary strategies to learn.

Huben's passion for math drives her to believe that math is for everyone. When a student has difficulty understanding a topic, Huben ensures extra time for the student to work and understand. Huben has also implemented innovative co-teaching strategies with special education teachers allowing students of all abilities to learn and love math.

Huben's passion for learning extends beyond mathematics. On her teaching team, Huben is constantly looking for trends and concerned about the 'whole student' instead of only what is happening in her classroom. Huben's excitement for learning is contagious, and allows middle school students to also be excited about class and school.

As a passionate educator who approaches obstacles as opportunities, Huben understands that sometimes a student only needs one teacher to be patient, listen, and be there for them. Example after example can be provided about how Huben has supported students who struggled previously but found a place of belonging in her classroom. Huben is always ready to positively alter the trajectory of a student's path one opportunity at a time.

Students at Westside Middle School regularly nominate Faren Huben for teacher awards. Nominations share examples of how Huben engages students in her classroom, altering math from a once boring subject to an exciting and fun topic. Students share how Huben allows them to feel accepted as they are, and never ashamed for shortcomings or differences. Plainly put, "She is literally the best. There are no other words necessary."

Congratulations to Faren Huben, most deserving of this honor as a Phillip and Terri Schrager Distinguished Teaching Award recipient.