



## Special Thanks

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Dunbar High School Jazz Ensemble  
2015 Maryland Teachers of the Year  
Past *Parent Involvement Matters Awards* Recipients  
Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Staff\*

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### \*Appreciation is extended to the following MSDE staff persons:

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## 8th Annual *Parent Involvement Matters Award Celebration*

Martin's West  
Friday, June 5, 2015  
6:00 p.m - 8:30 p.m.



*Choose your seat. Get involved!*

Thank you for joining the Maryland State Department of Education to celebrate the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Parent Involvement Matters Award (PIMA) Celebration! We are here tonight to honor 24 outstanding parents and guardians who volunteer their time to truly make a difference in Maryland's public education. You will hear about the incredible impact these parents have had on their communities and how parent involvement is the single-most significant factor in ensuring student success. Whether it is in the classroom, on the athletic fields, or in the community, **parent involvement has a seat**, and we encourage you to do your part.



## DINNER AWARDS PROGRAM

### WELCOME

KATE AMARA  
NEWS ANCHOR, WBAL-TV

### ENTERTAINMENT

THE DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ ENSEMBLE

### REMARKS

REV. BRENDA GIRTON-MITCHELL  
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DR. LILLIAN M. LOWERY  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

JODY ZEPP  
2015 MARYLAND TEACHER OF THE YEAR

RAY LEONE  
MARYLAND PTA PRESIDENT

### PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

SEMIFINALISTS  
FINALISTS  
STATEWIDE WINNER

## 2015 Parent Involvement Matters Awards Local Honorees

### *Colleen Gabler*

Talbot County, Easton Middle School

Colleen's volunteer efforts are highlighted through the school's basketball program. Recognizing that middle school students need a safe place to be on a Friday night, and basketball provides just such a haven, Colleen is involved in every detail of the program. She even makes sure that after practice, all participants have a hot meal before they leave and a safe ride home.

### *Lauren Myers*

Washington County, Pangborn Elementary School

When Pangborn's PTA dissolved and only a skeleton group remained, Lauren stepped up and became its president. Since then, parents have hosted many successful events as well as a variety of fundraising programs which have contributed significantly to the school. Lauren was able to create success through structure and accountability.

### *Dr. Glenn Hornstein*

Wicomico County, Westside Intermediate School

Four years ago, Glenn, an emergency room physician, created a vibrant Westside Chess Club. A Chess Tournament came next and this year included over 100 students from all parts of Wicomico County. Glenn is convinced that chess enhances memory, boosts spatial and numerical skills, increases problem-solving, and strengthens logical thinking. Many teachers agree, and are noticing academic improvement among Chess Club students.

### *Stephanie Truitt-Drimal*

Worcester County, Cedar Chapel Special School

Stephanie knows first-hand the challenges facing families needing resources and support for their special needs students. She created a network of parents and organizations called Parents Helping Parents which has greatly improved communication and awareness among families and organizations. As a result, contributions have poured in, for needed technology that can help in instruction.



A special recognition and appreciation to *Juliana Lytwynec, Gillian Borkoski, Sarah Schaefer, Michala Keane, and Ms. Lara Shuman* of Franklin High School in Baltimore County, for sharing their artistic talents by painting the 2015 Parent Involvement Matters Awards chairs.





## 2015 Parent Involvement Matters Awards Local Honorees

### *Andrew Niebler*

Montgomery County, Westland Middle School

Andrew started the Westland Cares program to help needy students and families with holiday meals over Thanksgiving and gift cards over the holidays. With success, he added a food and household items pantry, scholarships for after-school activities, book fair certificates, and a holiday house for students needing gifts for family members. Andrew's work is about neighbors connecting with neighbors providing security, inclusion, and community building.

### *Latrena Hines-Bean*

Prince George's County, Columbia Park Elementary School

Latrena mobilized parents, students and staff to form the Columbia Park Elementary Beautification Committee that transformed the school grounds which had become a dumping place for trash. She managed to recruit the largest turnout of parents, staff, and students for a Beautification Party that has had a lasting impact on her school.

### *Dominique Ellingsworth-Mohen*

Queen Anne's County, Sudlersville Elementary School

Dominique's trademark volunteer project is Sudlersville's Earth Day Celebration. From scheduling experts of the Department of Natural Resources, to recruiting volunteers, and organizing activities, she is involved in every aspect of that event. Her goal is to make sure the celebration provides an educational as well as a fun learning experience for the students.

### *Sharmella Riggs*

St. Mary's County, Leonardtown High School

Sharmella, an Aircraft Systems Acquisition Manager at the Naval Air Warfare Center, volunteers on the school's Executive Diversity Council as the STEM Educational Outreach Team Lead. She also serves as the Ladies of Excellence program mentor, helping female students with workshops ranging from budgeting to dressing for success and from resume writing and job applications to workplace etiquette.

### *Tara Evanusa*

Somerset County, Greenwood Elementary School

When asked to serve as the PTA president, Tara wasted no time in recruiting parents and family members. Within the first month of the school year, the PTO membership increased significantly—the largest jump in five years. With new parents on board came new ideas, more increased fundraising activities, and a greater sense of community involvement.

## 2015 Parent Involvement Matters Awards Local Honorees

### *Malinda Darber*

Allegany County, Northeast Elementary School

As President of the PTA, Melinda organized numerous fundraisers and ensured funds be used to support all students. She helped organize and carry out several movie nights at Northeast and organized various holiday activities including a holiday shop for students during Christmas.

### *Kerry A. Petz*

Anne Arundel County, Arnold Elementary School

Kerry is quite the advocate. She was a leader in encouraging a feasibility study for school construction for Arnold Elementary, galvanizing parents, governing bodies and school leaders. Success on this level then led her to advocate for improved sidewalks and crosswalks to enhance walker safety.

### *Annie Matthews*

Baltimore City, Gardenville Elementary School

Volunteering countless hours of her time in classrooms and hallways, running the school store and helping in the cafeteria only touches the surface of Annie's parent involvement. Leading a school beautification project, she orchestrated the painting of hallways and lockers in the school colors and worked to create a mural for the annual Scholastic Book Fair.

### *Monica Leigh*

Baltimore County, West Towson Elementary School

"Going green" is the theme for Monica Leigh who created an up-cycling program. This involves training the school's team of "greener cleaners—three or four students from each class—to assist with up-cycling waste in the cafeteria: from chip bags to energy bar wrappers. Her efforts go a long way in recycling and at the same time, contributing funds to her school.

### *Kim Koteff*

Calvert County – Plum Point Elementary School

With over 100 new families coming to Plum Point, Kim organized a welcome BBQ for new families and students to meet current families and students as well as teachers, administrators, and staff members. She also helped raise money for technology needs such as iPads and Smartboards thereby encouraging the installation of wireless internet throughout the building.



## 2015 Parent Involvement Matters Awards Local Honorees

### *Danielle Jacobsen*

Caroline County, Ridgely Elementary School

Danielle was creative in forming the PTA Facebook group which quickly relays information to parents and helped to greatly increase parent and teacher involvement. She spearheaded a fundraiser that doubled fundraising goals and is also the school's unofficial graphic designer, creating school spirit wear, flyers, posters and yearbook layouts.

### *Sara Zaranski*

Carroll County, Robert Moton Elementary School

Sara created a parent volunteering project for grade level teams. This project enhances communication and parent volunteering needed within the school. Sara compiles a volunteer schedule suggesting ways parents can support teachers and students. She also communicates about upcoming events so they can run smoothly and seamlessly.

### *Joseph Cline*

Cecil County, Holly Hall Elementary School

Joseph is the spirit and volunteer behind the creation of a rain garden habitat and outdoor classroom to assist STEM education initiatives. Joseph identified experts in the community who donated their time to help plan and create the habitat, in addition to securing materials for little or no cost from local businesses or organizations. Both the school and the environment have benefitted greatly.

### *Yolanda Judge*

Charles County, C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School

Yolanda assists teachers in the classroom, helps administration with office needs, and serves as PTO President. Under her leadership, the PTO membership has tripled, participation and feedback during PTO meetings has significantly increased, and the quality of parent nights greatly improved.

### *Shelli Blake*

Dorchester County, Warwick Elementary School

Good marketing and a new name made a huge difference as Shelli overhauled a less effective parent organization with a new brand - Parents Assisting Warwick Students, or PAWS. In its first year, over \$15,000 was raised to purchase student materials, provide funds for field trips, offer assemblies, and sponsor Spring Fest.

## 2015 Parent Involvement Matters Awards Local Honorees

### *Tracy Herald*

Frederick County, Kemptown Elementary School

Tracy planned and executed the school's first Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) night—a most successful parent outreach activity. Through her work as an employee of WeatherBug, the world's largest weather and climate-sensor network, Kemptown became a weather reporting station used by students on a daily basis.

### *June McClosky*

Garrett County, Southern High School

June's daughter, Samantha, dreamed of attending art school and pursuing a career in the arts. After losing her in a tragic car accident, June turned her grief into something positive—creating the "Samantha Funding the Arts Foundation," which has brought grants to schools for art and music supplies, provided field trip opportunities, and helped bring special performances to schools and the community at-large.

### *Susan Kipp*

Harford County, Youth's Benefit Elementary School

As STEM Club Coordinator and STEM PTA Representative in the school's PTA, Susan created a school Facebook page connecting and encouraging families to participate at monthly after school STEM events. She also established a partnership with Aberdeen Proving Ground scientists, who bring scientific demonstrations and lessons to students in grades K-5.

### *Richard Ryans*

Howard County, Ducketts Lane Elementary School

Richard took the reins and charted a course for his school's PTA. He established an official PTA Charter and helped families get to know each other, the new school, and its staff. He also successfully led the development of a PTA Strategic Plan, focused on building a strong school community and shaping parent involvement initiatives for the year.

### *Alberto Rosanova*

Kent County, Worton Elementary School

Alberto has been a leading member of Worton's Watch D.O.G. Program—which was developed by the National Center for Fathering and designed to increase the number of positive male role models in schools. Alberto has logged more hours than any of the other volunteer and is the first to arrive and the last one to leave at all activities.