



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2021

Rainy River District School Board recognizes volunteers and employees

At its June 1, 2021 regular Board meeting, which was held remotely, the Rainy River District School Board announced the recipients of the Recognition of Service awards, honoring the 2021 Employees of the Year, Bus Driver of the Year, Volunteers of the Year, and Community Partner of the Year.

This year, the Employees of the Year went to both a group of hard-working employees, as well as a dedicated teacher. The Information Technology Services Department at the Education Centre, made up of Stephen Danielson, William Sixsmith, Jeff Wall, Cindy Glavish, Matthias Marx, Nigel Hunter, Bruce Masson, as well as student workers, Gavin Morrisseau, and Victoria Beaudry, were recognized for their continued tech support throughout a very challenging year. They managed to equip the entire system of staff and students with devices for remote learning and were always available to provide assistance when problems occurred.

Mary Ann Haw, a long-time teacher at Sturgeon Creek School, was also named Employee of the Year. Mrs. Haw was recognized for her positive, optimistic attitude, her inspiration and love of teaching, and her commitment to celebrating her students' accomplishments. It was noted that Mrs. Haw, who is retiring at the end of the school year, will be greatly missed by the students and fellow staff members.

The Bus Driver of the Year award was presented to Jennifer Jourdain, who drives for Couchiching First Nation. She was noted for always making an extra effort to ensure that the students had a great trip both to school and home. During this pandemic, Ms. Jourdain ensured the safety of the children by practicing all health and safety guidelines, while maintaining a friendly atmosphere. The community was grateful she came out of retirement to drive students this year.

Carolyn Kreger, of Rainy River, was named Volunteer of the Year for her assistance at Riverview School. While following all COVID-19 procedures, she helped out daily with the breakfast program, making sure all meals were healthy and nutritious. In addition, she provided healthy snacks for students who often did not have a lunch, and she also used her sewing talents to make masks and donate them to the school. Her efforts were very much appreciated by the school community.

The Community Partners of the Year were the Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU), specifically Shannon Robinson and Stephanie Cran, and the Kenora-Rainy River Child and Family Services Clinicians. Ms. Robinson and Ms. Cran were indispensable this school year in assisting the school Board navigate the health and safety of students and staff. The NWHU provided tremendous support by assisting the Board with the development of the school reopening plan, co-creating the school climate surveys, and providing schools with various supports and programs, such as mental health and anti-bullying, all while working to prevent and address COVID-19 within our region.

The Kenora-Rainy River Districts Child and Family Services Child and Youth Mental Health Clinicians were also recognized for the mental health supports they provided students during this very challenging year. Between pandemic worries, masking, and social distancing, this year tested the resiliency of our students, and the mental health clinicians were there to focus on the mental health and wellness of our students. The school communities were grateful for this essential partnership.

Board Chair Raymond Roy noted the Selection Committee was pleased to see so many nominations submitted for the Recognition of Service awards this year and thanked those who took the time to nominate deserving individuals from their school communities.

“We are so grateful for the commitment and dedication of the staff, community partners, bus drivers and volunteers who continue to give their time, energy and expertise to support our school communities. Their efforts are appreciated now, more than ever, given the challenges experienced this year,” said Mr. Roy. “We acknowledge that the work and support received helped our students persevere through another unconventional year.”

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Media Contact:

Heather Campbell, Director of Education, Rainy River District School Board (807) 274-9855

Reference:

Heather Latter, Community Outreach Officer, Rainy River District School Board (807) 274-9855 ext. 4989

Mission: *“Together, we empower all students to believe in themselves, to achieve, and to dream.”*

Vision: *“The Rainy River District School Board is an innovative community, nurturing hearts and minds, to build a foundation for tomorrow, today.”*

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