

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 9, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: E. Dossall, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: “An Act to Follow” Staff Recognition Program
ORIGINATOR: N. Diemert, Leadership Services

INFORMATION

The *Act to Follow* initiative was designed to recognize and celebrate outstanding performances of staff which have resulted in tangible gains in student achievement, and to share the expertise and experience of these staff throughout the district in the An Act to Follow publication.

Act to Follow, Act 3

Robyn Buchan – Teacher – Newton School

Robyn Buchan faces the challenge of teaching children in a special education class at Newton School, but also reaps the rewards of observing on-going, significant growth in her students. These rewards are enhanced when she sees students overcoming their frustrations, and experiencing the success which results from working at appropriate levels. These students become excited about going to school and getting their homework done, something that evokes a great deal of gratitude among their parents.

Robyn’s classroom at Newton is known simply as “Room 17”. Other teachers and visitors observe that “these kids don’t even know they are in special education”. It’s easy to love special education students, Robyn says, because they love you and depend on you. Her overall philosophy is: “I push my students to the limits, but I catch them if they fall.”

Cheryl Fraser – Teacher – Mount Pleasant School

Cheryl Fraser is recognized as a significant factor in the success of Cogito, a program at Mount Pleasant School that has more than doubled in enrolment in just five years. She is delighted to receive this recognition, but is quick to point out that the accolades unquestionably belong to the whole staff – all the people who worked so hard to get the program to its present level of success. “We are always there for each other ,” Cheryl says “We’re a team”.

Cheryl's classroom style exemplifies an atmosphere of academic rigor, a strong classroom management style, a caring and respectful manner towards students and a spirit of knowing that students are always capable of giving just a little bit more. Her commitment to making this attractive program work well for students, staff and parents has been clearly evident from the outset. She has contributed enormously in establishing a collaborative professional learning community in which consistency of expectations is shared, practiced and achieved, not only among her Cogito colleagues, but also with her counterparts in the regular program.

Pam Luscombe – Administrative Assistant – Northmount School

Pam Luscombe has been providing exemplary service to the students, staff and parents at Northmount School for the past 28 years. She has always thrived on the human contact that her work provides, and she views the opportunity to meet and help the many people who walk by her desk each day as the best part of her job.

Pam plays a major role in making the school a safe place for the little people. That comes as a result of remembering the name of each student and information about their families, and also as a result of all the ice and band-aids that she hands out, complete with large doses of sympathy about real or imagined injuries.

It is not uncommon for former Northmount students to return for a chat with Pam. Most are just dropping by to check on things, show off their offspring or share their latest achievements, and others show up as parents of current students. Pam sees this family atmosphere as one of the benefits of a stable and well established neighbourhood, but others are certain that much of the friendly and nurturing environment at Northmount can be attributed to the long-term presence of Pam Luscombe.

Janet Stiles – Teacher – McKernan School

Janet Stiles is a exemplary teacher at McKernan School who epitomizes quality teaching. She is the counselor for nearly 600 students, a Grade 7 language arts teacher, the organizer and facilitator of the junior high Enrichment Program, and the person responsible for the Change Group for Grade 9 students wanting to make positive changes in their lives. Everything that Janet does is done to the highest degree. She does things thoroughly, creatively and enthusiastically, and she has that wonderful ability to make learning fun!

Janet has spent the last six months developing a curriculum that focuses on emotional intelligence and brain-based strategies for success. This project, called Making Connections, is focused on junior high students making changes in their lives to achieve what they want in life. It is activity based, thought provoking and deals with issues facing adolescents today.

Janet's principal describes her as "one of the most organized individuals I have ever worked with – it is absolutely amazing how much she can fit into a day."