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**THE CATHOLIC FOUNDATION AWARDS TWO, \$5,000
GRAND WORK OF HEARTS AWARDS TO DALLAS-AREA TEACHERS**

Additional 11 teachers recognized, presented with \$500 grants

DALLAS – The Catholic Foundation recently recognized two deserving Dallas-area teachers with Grand Work of Heart Awards and a \$5,000 grant each to spend as they wish. In addition, the Foundation granted \$500 to 11 local Catholic school teachers and staff as a thank you for their commitment to their students and to their schools.

Work of Heart Award recipients are nominated by students, teachers, parents, administrators and community members. The nominations are judged based on traditional merit criteria including tenure and leadership, acts of kindness or charity, Christian example, mentoring and simply going the extra mile for an individual student, family or the community.

“The outstanding number of nomination letters we receive each month validate not only the caliber of the educators, staff and administrators in our Catholic Schools, but also the impact that the Work of Heart Awards program has in our community,” said Edwin M. Schaffler, president of the Catholic Foundation. “It is wonderful to see parents and peers alike taking the time to nominate a candidate so they can be recognized and rewarded for their commitment to providing a Catholic education to our students.”

This year, the Foundation has formed a committee, with members of its Advisory Council, to read the nomination letters received each month and decide which teachers and staff members will receive a Work of Heart Award. The following recipients were distinguished as Grand Award winners, received a \$5,000 grant for their personal use.

Joanne Noller, head of the Early Childhood Development Center at Bishop Dunne Catholic School, was nominated for this award for always extending herself beyond her job title, beyond school hours and beyond expectations. One of Noller’s greatest accomplishments is the Bishop Dunne Early Childhood Learning Center, which she founded and runs. Over the past three years, the center has achieved great success and has grown from four children to having an extensive waiting list to get in. Although this job requires longer than normal hours, Noller recently took on the additional position of volleyball coach, sixth grade World Cultures

teacher, and extended-day babysitter for other teachers. Defined in one of her letters as “meant to be a teacher” and the epitome of Catholic education, Noller truly gives of herself to better the lives of others.

Vanessa Perry, first grade teacher at St. Patrick Catholic School, had over 50 letters from parents and peers sent on her behalf, nominating her for a Work of Heart Award. Perry was chosen as a recipient of this award for truly instilling in her students, by her own example, the passion to learn, to grow and to achieve each day. Described as every child’s favorite teacher and an “amazing woman, gifted with energy and passion” admired by all, Perry’s dedication to her job extends to her time outside of the classroom as well, attending students sporting events and after school activities. And, in addition to fulfilling her role as educator, Perry also fulfills the role of spiritual role model to her students teaching them about faith and strength and the importance of serving others.

The following recipients each received a \$500 Work of Heart Award in recognition of their outstanding service.

Bishop Dunne Catholic School

- Paul Wood, Religion Teacher

“Mr. Wood is a permanent fixture at Dunne. He is involved in so many activities that I could not begin to name them all. His love for his students and the school shows in so many ways. We are very fortunate to have Mr. Wood at Dunne and he is very deserving because he does ‘Work from his Heart’.”

Bishop Lynch High School

- Destiny Wagner, Physics Teacher

“Destiny is a teacher who routinely goes the ‘extra mile’ to ensure that all students understand the sometimes daunting concepts of Physics. She is enthusiastic about the subject matter, and this enthusiasm is passed along to her students. Her teaching style truly is a reflection of her personality – kind, calm, patient and dedicated.”

Christ the King Catholic School

- Molly Schroepfer, Third Grade Teacher

“Mrs. Schroepfer is ‘Wild About Third Grade’. Every day her students are able to talk about what they are ‘wild about; which makes life and learning fun and positive! Molly shows enthusiastic instruction with her spelling games and unexpected acts of kindness. She also sets a Christian example every day.”

Cistercian Preparatory School

- Peter Saliga, History Teacher & Form Master

“If I could have described Mr. Saliga by one word when I was getting to know him I would have said pious. Through his influence, our class has come to enjoy service projects together and trying our best in all we do. By living out the themes of praying, living and playing and doing them with honor and joyfulness he has taught many people – students and parents alike – that it is those around us and God alone who can truly make us happy.”

The Highlands School

- Sarah Bick, Spanish Teacher

“What amazes me about Ms. Bick is not her academic excellence, although she has that; it is not her professional polish and achievement, although she has that; it is her humility. What is remarkable about Ms. Bick is her willingness to lend a hand and do the job no one else wants, not expecting credit or attention.”

Jesuit College Preparatory School

- Raul Ornelas, Spanish Teacher

“As a Jesuit graduate, Raul not only learned the six characteristics that should define a Jesuit graduate, but now models them daily to our current students – open to growth, intellectually competent, physically fit, loving, religious and committed to working for justice. Raul seems to be the personification of the qualities demanded by the Work of Heart award for excellence in Catholic education.”

John Paul II High School

- Peg Waldschmidt, Music, Theatre & Choir Teacher

“Mrs. Waldschmidt has the duties of three teachers, but she always seems to have a positive attitude throughout the day and does not complain. She works for hours to make the experience of theatre come alive and has a passion for teaching. She pushes people to be the best she can be and has a work ethic that doesn’t quit.”

Mount St. Michael Catholic School

- Kathy Fiegenschue, Math & Science Teacher

“Kathy’s patient and compassionate manner with each child has earned her great love and respect. She is indeed a blessing not only to our student body but also to the entire diocese through the children whose lives she has touched.”

St. Mary of Carmel School

- Maria Aviles, Student Health Coordinator & Nurse

“Maria is a very gentle person and does all her work very well and quietly. I really believe she is deserving of this award.”

St. Paul the Apostle Catholic School

- Kathy Bernock, First Grade Teacher

“Kathy has so much to offer other teachers and she never lets anything get in the way. Her classroom is a happy, fun, creative place to be for first graders. She always goes above and beyond when it comes to her children in her class.”

St. Rita Catholic School

- Dee Santini, Music Teacher

“Mrs. Santini brings everything to life. She is loving, energetic, caring and a wonderful asset to St. Rita. Because of her, I feel this is the first year that a majority of the student body sings along in mass, clapping and truly enjoying the gift of music. She has accomplished so many things already and the year is only half way done.”

The Work of Heart Award program was established in 2005 and funded solely by an anonymous Dallas family through the Catholic Foundation. To this day the program has given 541 grants totaling \$478,500 to educators and staff of Catholic lower, middle and high schools located in the Dallas area. This year, The Catholic Foundation has matched the family's contribution to the program. The family invites like-minded individuals to join them in recognizing the effort and commitment of the educators and staff in their local Catholic schools. Individual contributions can be made to the Work of Heart Award Fund at the Catholic Foundation.

Chartered in 1955 by a group of dedicated Catholic laymen, The Catholic Foundation is a donor-focused community foundation that guides benefactors in compassionate charitable giving endeavors, utilizing extensive expertise to carry out the various philanthropic goals of its donors. The Foundation's planned giving programs connects donors directly with organizations they wish to support within the Diocese of Dallas and elsewhere, whether that is a home parish, Catholic school or a community-based charity. Thanks to the generosity of donors both past and present, The Foundation has provided approximately \$22 million to local organizations through hundreds of grants over the past 53 years, and donor-advised funds maintained at the Foundation have accounted for even more grants amounting to millions of dollars. **For additional information about The Catholic Foundation, call 972.661.9792.**

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