



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Edwin M. Schaffler, President

972.661.9792

**SPRING ARRIVES WITH HONORS FOR DALLAS-AREA TEACHERS, STAFF RECEIVING
“WORK OF HEART” CASH AWARDS**

Recipients receive \$500 each for personal use

DALLAS – What do an administrative counselor from St. Monica Catholic School, a janitor from Immaculate Conception School and a history teacher from St. Paul the Apostle school have in common? They are among a select group of 21 teachers and staff from Dallas-area Catholic schools receiving a Work of Heart award and \$500 gift from The Catholic Foundation.

The Work of Heart Awards were established by an anonymous Dallas family through The Catholic Foundation to honor educators and staff of Catholic lower, middle and high schools located in the Diocese of Dallas. Since 2005, the Catholic Foundation has presented 427 grants totaling \$299,000 to individuals who serve children in 37 area schools. Recipients are nominated by students, teachers, parents, administrators and community members and receive \$500 for their personal use.

“In each of our local Catholic schools, teachers, mentors and role models make a positive difference in the lives of children. Whether it is in the classroom, the front office or the hallway, there are educators and staff members who go above and beyond,” said Edwin M. Schaffler, Foundation president and CEO. “The Catholic Foundation is honored to provide them with a special thank you and extra recognition for their service through the Work of Heart awards. We hope other parents and community members will join us in this show of appreciation.”

Recipients of the Work of Heart Awards were selected from written nominations submitted to the Catholic Foundation and 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 following recipients each received a \$500 Work of Heart Award in recognition of their outstanding service. Each is listed with a comment from the nomination letter submitted on his or her behalf.

-more-

The Highlands School

- Tammy Tran, Lower School Specialist

"Tammy has been an unsung hero at our school for many years. She teaches enrichment classes to our lower school students and also helps out the young people who are struggling with phonics and math. She was the organizing head for the regional Private Schools Interscholastic Association competition that was held at The Highlands School. We won first place and will go on to the state competition. None of this would have happened without Tammy's selfless, generous service."

Holy Trinity Catholic School

- Meghan Jones, Math and Science Middle School Teacher

"In the short time Meghan has been at Holy Trinity, she has made impressive improvements to our school in several areas. She has worked with the other middle school teachers to improve students' academic levels and instituted the science fair here. It is apparent that her students appreciate her. I know our school has been blessed by the presence of Meghan Jones."

Immaculate Conception School

- Lorenzo and Manuel Patino, Janitors (all nominations came from children)

"Manuel and Lorenzo Patinos are the brothers who keep our school clean, and they keep us in working order."

"They are always happy with great smiles on their faces. I don't think that I could choose just one of them so I had to choose both of them because they work as a team, kind of like Mario and Luigi."

"They always are very kind, smiling to everyone, and do their work without losing their spirit. They both come early and leave late until their job is done."

"They are the reason why our school is still here because they fix things to make our school to keep on standing up. They make me proud and they also make everybody in the school very proud. It would mean so much to me if they get nominated."

- Heather Williams, 1st Grade Teacher

"This teacher has given every child a chance. She is every kid's dream as a teacher because she would have so much fun with us and the games would be about learning. This person is Mrs. Williams."

"It is my pleasure to write about this young lady, Heather Williams, now a first grade teacher at her own alma mater, Immaculate Conception. It is that smile that motivates each first grader under her care to shine all the way. She demands the best with that radiant smile and yes she gets it!"

John Paul II High School

- Michael Browning, Orchestra and Band Teacher

"I believe that Mr. Browning deserves the award because he is a very talented, sweet teacher. Since I was new to the school, he made sure I was okay and comfortable with the school. I am nominating him because he is one of the most phenomenal teachers that any student could ask for."

- Soriya Nelson, Spanish Teacher

"Mrs. Nelson is an amazing, intellectual, responsible and supportive teacher at my school. She pushes us to do our best, consoles us when needed and is trustworthy. Mrs. Nelson would be an excellent candidate for the Work of Heart award because she is the one teacher who has influenced me the most. She has taught me many things, not only in Spanish, but in life."

Mount St. Michael Catholic School

- Niki Mitasso, 5th Grade Teacher

"She does many creative activities with her students, making history come to life and science fun to learn. Her dedication is amazing. Her family is dedicated to ministry – to their kids at home, the youth at Mary Immaculate, and to the large class of 5th graders that Mrs. Matasso shepherds daily at MSMCS."

- Terri Pham, Montessori Teacher

"She is a beautiful, hidden asset to the school. Like a pearl, Terri almost goes unnoticed – except for the calm and gentle spirit that she exudes. She focuses on what each child can do and begins her lessons at that point. She is selflessly giving of her heart to make the children of tomorrow grounded in kindness, respect and reverence."

Notre Dame School of Dallas

- Sue Harding, Vocational Center Instructor

“Sue brings an enthusiasm to the classroom which makes the students look forward to coming to school and enjoy being there. She sets a high standard of expectations that the students are willing to achieve because they know she loves them and they love her. Sue also takes students off campus to El Centro where she mentors them in a special program to help them increase their self-esteem and find success in an unfamiliar environment.”

- Missy Ruvaldt-Almquist, Teaching Assistant

“She is the heart and soul of our Intermediate department and works each and every day with a positive attitude and giving spirit. She comes to work with a smile on her face and a song in her heart, and the students react positively to her. She makes it a joy to come to work and is a true treasure to our students.”

“Ms. Missy is truly exceptional – someone who was sent to this earth by God to do a very special job with some very special kids!”

“She is one of those phenomenal people who is the ‘glue’ that holds things together. She is so well loved by everyone.”

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic School

- Johnnie Quigley, 3rd Grade Teacher

“As a first year teacher she has done incredible things with her students. She has two students that are a bit of a challenge, but each day these two children have improved with her help and patience.”

- Donald Stephens, 5th Grade Teacher

“Donald has been with us for two years and has grown with the school and the children far beyond his required expectations. As I see Mr. Stephens throughout the day, he is always with a smile and upbeat. The children have great respect for him.”

St. Joseph Catholic School, Waxahachie

- Linda Reyna, 1st Grade Teacher

“Ms. Reyna’s class is a safe, comfortable environment where students are expected to work hard, think hard, and take chances. Students know to come to class ready to learn, and Ms. Reyna makes learning fun with her quick wit. Ms. Reyna is truly a blessing that has been visited upon our family. She is not only preparing my daughter to be a better student, she is helping her to become a better person.”

St. Mark Catholic School, Plano

- Patty Helm and Maria Smith, Kindergarten Teachers

“The patience and love that Mrs. Helm and Mrs. Smith have for all of the children is beyond belief. ‘Let No Child Be Left Behind’ are not just words on their walls. It is truly what they do everyday.”

St. Mary of Carmel School

- Rita DeLeon, Office Manager

“Seventeen years ago she was employed as our school secretary, the official post she continues to hold to the present time. However, besides her regular office duties, Rita also coordinates the school lunch program, distributes food and clothes to the needy, and organizes various fundraisers for the school and church. Rita is loyal, dedicated, hard-working and one of the most genuine and trustworthy people I’ve ever known.”

St. Monica Catholic School

- June Cooper, Administrative Counselor

“June has been at St. Monica for 11 years and has helped countless people in so many ways. She will spend two hours with a parent who is worried about their child, whether it’s academics, social skills or just a parent figuring out how to adjust as their child grows up. She also has an open door policy, that at any time a parent or student is feeling overwhelmed, and we have, June is available and willing to help us through it.”

“Mrs. Cooper is known to put no limits on her willingness to serve the school and parish community. Although she is supposed to be working part-time, she often works a full week and even comes in on Saturdays to meet the needs of the students and the school community. One parent stated that after meeting with Mrs. Cooper ‘her tears of regret turned to tears of hope and joy.’ We know that dozens of students, parents, friends and colleagues could make that same comment.”

St. Patrick School

- Pamela Suter, 3rd Grade Teacher

"The work that Mrs. Suter does as a teacher is truly work from the heart and the Lord knew what He was doing when He put my child in her class. She has told me that she will do whatever it takes to help my son be successful, and she has. She is truly a Christian role model."

St. Paul the Apostle, Richardson

- Tracy Lopez, History Teacher, 6th - 8th Grades

"She is an outstanding teacher, leader, friend and parent. She takes history to a new level of learning. She uses much of her own personal time to help our student council by volunteering and taking on various community service projects. The students love her, and so do we."

St. Rita School

- Bernadette Marcus, Kindergarten Aide

"In the classroom, Bernie is gentle and caring, yet firm with the children. They respond easily and well to her. She is a shining example of someone who puts others first and truly works from the heart."

"She's an exceptional aide, not only in the classroom but outside the classroom as well. She's always helping a family in need. She tutors underprivileged children without pay. She always sees the good in people."

To nominate a candidate for the "Work of Heart" Award, please contact the Foundation's Web site at **www.catholicfoundation.com** for instructions on the nomination process. Anyone serving as a full- or part-time employee in a Catholic school located in the Diocese of Dallas may be nominated. In addition to the \$500 awards, The Catholic Foundation will present up to eight Grand Awards of \$5,000 each during the school year.

An anonymous family has solely funded the Work of Heart Awards for the past three years and is now inviting like-minded individuals to join them. The family has offered to match individual donations to The Catholic Foundation for the Work of Heart Awards fund up to an undetermined amount, in an effort to permanently endow the program.

Chartered in 1955, The Catholic Foundation was founded by a group of dedicated Catholic laymen with a vision that extended far beyond the charitable needs of the moment. For over 50 years, this independent, nonprofit corporation has dedicated its resources to compassionate charitable giving through grants provided by benefactors through its many planned giving programs. The Foundation has been able to provide approximately \$21 million through hundreds of grants to various religious, educational and charitable organizations within the Diocese of Dallas during its 50 plus years of existence. In addition, donor-advised funds maintained at the Foundation have accounted for many more grants amounting to millions of dollars over the years. **For additional information about The Catholic Foundation, call 972.661.9792.**