

*North Area Good News*  
*January 21, 2010*  
*J.P. Taravella High School*

*Broward County's Character Trait for January is Respect*

**RESPECT:** Showing consideration, understanding and regard for people, places and things.



*Resolution in Support of:*

Resolution in Support of National Magnet Schools of America Month - January 2010

Resolution in Support of National School Counselors' Week - February 1-5, 2010

Resolution in Support of Groundhog Job Shadow Week - January 25-29, 2010

Resolution in Support of No Name-Calling Week - January 25-29, 2010

Resolution in Support of Florida Jewish History Month - January 2010

Resolution in Support of Black History Month - February 2010



**Cathy Blankenship Named Broward's School-Related Employee of the Year**

**Quiet Waters Elementary School's** Cathy Blankenship has been named Broward County Public Schools School-Related Employee of the Year 2010. The announcement came at a ceremony December 16<sup>th</sup> at the Signature Grand in Davie. Blankenship, who has been a District employee for 28 years, currently serves as Office Manager I/Confidential at **Quiet Waters Elementary**. Blankenship has experience and knowledge that enables her to understand the responsibilities of each clerical job classification. These skills allow her to manage the clerical staff and make implementations to assure a smooth running office. The North Area is very proud that one of our own has again been recognized with this honor.

Finalists for School-Related Employee of the Year 2010 include: Jenna Gentile, Guidance Data Specialist, Nova High School; Deokumar "Duke" Megnauth, Micro-Computer Technology Specialist, Gulfstream Middle School; Bess Scully, Office Manager/Confidential Secretary, Nob Hill Elementary School; **Joy Thibodeau, Secretary II, Coconut Creek High School**; and Astrid Thomas, Food and Nutrition Services Manager, Stranahan High School.

**Five High Schools Named Among Best High Schools 2010 By U.S. News & World Report**

Five Broward County Public Schools high schools - Atlantic Technical Center, Fort Lauderdale High School, Nova High School, **Pompano Beach High School**, William T. McFatter High School - were named among the Best High Schools 2010 in a recent analysis conducted by *U.S. News & World Report*. All five high schools received silver medals - representing the top 3% of high schools in the country. *U.S. News & World Report* - in collaboration with School Evaluation Services, a K-12 education and data research and analysis business that provides

parents with education data on ([schoolmatters.com](http://schoolmatters.com)) - analyzed academic and enrollment data from more than 21,000 public high schools in 48 states to identify the best across the country. The schools were placed into gold, silver, bronze or honorable mention categories. A three-step process determined the best high schools. The first two steps ensured that the schools serve all their students well, using state proficiency standards as the benchmarks. For those schools that made it past the first two steps, a third step assessed the degree to which schools prepare students for college-level work.

## **Recently Released Graduations Rates Show More Students Graduating**

The newly applied National Governor's Association (NGA) formula for high school graduation was released several weeks ago. As you recall, Broward County Public Schools had an increase in the graduation rate from 69.7 percent in 2007-08 to 73.9 percent in 2008-09. Additional data provided this week also shows that over a four-year period, Broward's students registered increases in graduation for every race/ethnic subgroup. Finally, when looking at individual school data, 60 percent (=20) of non-charter high schools increased their NGA graduation rate by at least one percentage point or more from 2007-08 to 2008-09. Notably, Dillard, South Broward, Atlantic Technical and Coconut Creek High Schools dramatically increased their graduation rates and are the Broward schools that made the highest gains during the last two years reported.

## **Hunt Elementary**

Congratulations on your selection as one of the finalists for the NCUST Excellence in Urban Education Award! A team will be visiting and learning about all of the wonderful things they are doing to ensure student achievement. The team will include between 2 and 5 individuals and will arrive at school at the beginning of a school day. During the visit, they will spend most of their time visiting classrooms to observe teaching/learning. They will also to interview personnel and parents, and about 5 students

## **HOLIDAY CARDS DESIGNED BY TWO STUDENTS SELECTED FOR USE BY BROWARD EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

The greeting cards sent to community leaders and other supporters of public education by the Broward Education Foundation this season, will feature the artwork of two Broward County Public Schools students. The artistic talents of other Broward students will brighten the season for soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Foundation, an organization that raises private funds in support of public education and offers scholarships, teacher grants and sponsors other projects, held a holiday card design contest. Over 200 entries were received. Two of the designs were selected as winners and each will be used on half of the nearly 1,000 cards BEF will send out this season. The other entries are being given to America'sMoms for Soldiers, a local, nonprofit organization that sends monthly "care packages" to servicemen and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

***The two first place winners were honored on Friday, December 18, 2009 at 9 a.m. at Quiet Waters Elementary School.***

The elementary level winner is Ashley Amian, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student at Quiet Waters. Her teacher, Christine Kraemer will also be honored at the event. The middle/high school level winner is Lauren Gomez, a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Driftwood Middle School. Gomez's teacher, Sara Fidel-Burns, will be recognized at a later date. The students will each receive art supplies from BEF's Kids In Need Resource Center, and their teachers will receive gift certificates.

Jorene Jameson, BEF's President and CEO will make the presentations during the event, and representatives from America's Moms for Soldiers as well as School District officials have been invited to attend.

***Nicole Marsala, Coral Springs Middle School, has been asked to be on the Commissioner's Task Force for Teachers. It is an honor to have her as part of our teaching force here in Broward, and we are excited that she will be on this task force.***

*It is a distinct honor for Broward County to have someone like you representing our teachers!*

## **JROTC Battalions Earn "Honor Unit With Distinction" Ranking**

Five Broward high school JROTC programs recently underwent their three-year formal US Army inspection. All five schools performed extremely well, with four schools - Everglades High, Monarch High, South Broward High and West Broward High - scoring above the 96% cutoff to receive the "Honor Unit with Distinction" (HUD - the

highest possible rating) ranking. To achieve this level, the cadets had to earn a minimum of 96% in each of 10 categories inspected.~McArthur High also earned a high score of 94%, barely missing the HUD ranking. All five programs were judged to be in the top 20% of all US Army JROTC programs nationwide. Of particular note,

West Broward High received the highest score of 98.5%. The new battalion volunteered to undergo their first formal

inspection a full year early, having only received full status as a JROTC program on November 2, 2009.

#### **Palmview Elementary and Watkins Elementary Named Florida Title I Distinguished Schools for 2008/09**

Two District schools have been identified as Florida Title I Distinguished Schools for 2008/09 by the Florida Department of Education. This recognition is awarded to only 17 of Florida's 1,391 Title 1 schools. **Palmview Elementary** (Robert Gibson, Principal) is being recognized for closing the achievement gap in reading and mathematics proficiency for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) students and English Language Learning (ELL) students. Watkins Elementary (Cynthia Hanna, Principal) is being recognized for sustained academic achievement over the last two years and for closing the achievement gap in reading and mathematics proficiency for FRPL students and ELL students. The Florida Title I Distinguished Schools award recognizes Title 1 Schools that have made the greatest progress in sustaining high levels of academic achievement and for closing the achievement gap for students in the No Child Left Behind subgroups. "These schools are a true example of educational excellence in Florida," stated Dr. Frances Haithcock, Chancellor of Public Schools.

#### **Board Recognizes Stoneman Douglas Student for Disability Awareness Efforts**

School Board members recognized Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School student, Garrett Mayersohn, for receiving the 2009 Student of the Year Disability Awareness Award from the Broard County Advisory Board for Individuals with Disabilities. The award is given to a student with a disability who attends a local school and has demonstrated either outstanding academic achievement or has demonstrated achievements in advocacy for the rights of students with disabilities. School Board member Robin Bartleman lauded Mayersohn for his lobbying efforts in Tallahassee to urge legislators for additional support of education, particularly for disabled students. Bartleman described him as a "true compassionate leader with unselfish dedication."

#### **NHS Brain Brawl**

Congratulations to the Stoneman Douglas NHS Brain Brawl team for being the North Area Champions once again! The team will face College Academy on January 27, 2010 for the County Championship. Team members are: Colin Bradley, Terrence Chin-Loy, Scott Eisner, Steven Geller, Anthony Fu, Kirill Klimuk, Kevin Liu and Yujie Wu. Team Sponsor is Lisa Hitchcock.

#### ***CUSTOMER SERVICE CHALLENGES CAN BECOME SUCCESS STORIES***

Research shows that customers with a complaint are likely to share their dissatisfaction with up to 16 other people, so missing an opportunity to address a complaint can fuel negative perceptions about your school. Even more alarming is research that shows only four percent of unhappy customers actually lodge official complaints. That's why it's critical that all school employees know how to effectively address concerns of parents or other who call. The good news is that with a little training, most school employees can become great ambassadors for their school.

Here are some helpful tips on handling complaints you can share with your staff:

- ◆ Avoid the urge to pre-judge customer complaints.
- ◆ Tune into the present. Focus your attention on the customer's immediate needs and concerns.
- ◆ Join the customer as he or she describes the issue-at-hand. Use active listening cues like an affirming nod or "I understand your concern" when on the phone.
- ◆ Never jump to conclusions and always seek customer affirmation when characterizing the nature of the problem.
- ◆ Focus on problem solving rather than blame. Ask questions without passing

judgment.

- ◆ Ask questions that get at the who, what, when, where and why.
- ◆ Ask confirming questions to verify understanding.
- ◆ Consider referrals that will offer resolution.
- ◆ Maintain a positive “I want to help” disposition toward customers by always being honest. And never make excuses.
- ◆ Avoid hostility at all cost.
- ◆ Be fast, flexible and friendly when offering solutions.
- ◆ Always follow through when addressing complaints. If someone else takes over, check back with the customer to make sure the problem was solved.
- ◆ Thank customers for bringing the problem to your attention.

Remember that the Public Relations & Governmental Affairs Department is available to assist you. To learn more about how the department can help you, please contact Executive Director Eddie T. Arnold, APR at 754-321-2300.

*Source: NSPRA's Unlocking Sensational Service: Tools for Tapping into Your People Power CD*