

## **2011-2012 Outstanding School Volunteers**

### **Region I – Youth**

#### **Leon County**

#### **Kathleen Kroll**

Kate has always been a passionate volunteer. This year, she led the charge for the largest fundraiser to date at Leon High School raising \$36,000 for the Image Recovery Center at the Cancer Unit at Tallahassee Memorial. She is an active leader in volunteer service projects with Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, Southeastern Community Blood Center, Second Harvest Food Bank of the Big Bend and ECHO. In addition, Kate organized events to recognize other students involved in making a difference in the community. As a member of several national honor societies, she also contributes to their community service projects.

### **Region I – Adult**

#### **Okaloosa County**

#### **Shawna Crist**

In short, Shawna Crist is a “doer.” Not only has she donated over 950 hours as a Plew volunteer in the past year, she designed and managed the campus revitalization, and along with other community volunteers, planted gardens and painted campus outbuildings – some of which exhibit her beautiful murals. She also spearheaded the “Dream Machine Recycle Rally” where students, teachers and parents recycled over one million items leading Plew to win 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the nation. In the media center, she works the circulation desk, helps with Accelerated Reader, and is the weekly K-2 story time volunteer, often dressing in character. She mentors and tutors at-risk students, listening to them read to improve fluency and comprehension. Shawna is truly the best of the best!

### **Region I – Senior**

#### **Santa Rosa County**

#### **Carla Davis**

Mrs. Davis is a dedicated volunteer at Gulf Breeze Elementary School. She begins and ends her day with the teachers – often volunteering 40 hours a week. In the art room, Mrs. Davis motivates the students working on their masterpieces, prepares materials for the next class, and even helps with local art shows. She can be also be found working with third grade readers in small groups providing guided reading instruction – helping them to strengthen vocabulary, comprehension and basic reading skills. She is very dependable and conscientious and is truly making a difference in helping these students to love reading.

### **Region II – Youth**

#### **St. Johns County**

#### **Douglas Griswold**

Douglas Griswold, Outstanding Youth Volunteer for the St. Johns County School District, began volunteering with special needs students when he was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. He enjoyed working with these students so much that he still volunteers in a prekindergarten classroom and the after school program at his former elementary school. He also uses his elective class time at his middle school to do the same. He makes a “heart connection” with each child to help foster a wonderful relationship and successful advancement in

areas of communication and daily living skills. His patience and determination to make a difference with the children he so dearly admires is shown on a daily basis. On his own time, Douglas has read books so that he can be even more effective with Exceptional Student Education pupils. He has also researched college information as he prepares to fulfill his life goal of working with special needs children by becoming a pediatric physical therapist. Students and teachers alike have reaped the benefit of his patience and determination. Douglas Griswold naturally exhibits traits and attributes that will continue to define him as an outstanding example to us all.

## **Region II- Adult**

### **Clay County**

#### **Shannon Bray**

A special light shines in the media center at Swimming Pen Creek Elementary and the faculty and staff says it is the “gentle spirit of Shannon Bray,” who always has a smile on her face and a hug for all. “Ms. Bray was the school’s first volunteer, helping to organize our Media Center even before the school opened its doors,” says Tracy McLaughlin, SPC principal. “She embraces the day ready to work.” Ms. Bray performs a myriad of jobs, including: helping children find books, shelving books, assisting with the school Book Fair, running errands and basically lending a hand whenever and wherever needed.

## **Region II – Senior**

### **Nassau County**

#### **Roberta Healey**

"Find a need and fill it." This quote from Ruth Peale embodies the spirit of Mrs. Roberta Healey, Senior Volunteer of the Year for Nassau School District. Mrs. Healey's passion for reading, coupled with her compassion for children, has led her to recognize the need for helping students who are struggling readers. She regularly works with small groups of students to refine their reading skills. She has an intuition in assessing their individual academic needs and works with each one to improve their performance. There is never an idle moment in her volunteer day. Mrs. Healey quietly moves about the school and gets to work. Her investment in our children and in the future of our community makes her an invaluable resource to us and an exemplary role model for other volunteers throughout the state.

## **Region III – Youth**

### **Martin County**

#### **Mikayla Pickard**

Eighth grade student, Mikayla Pickard, has been instrumental in creating and sustaining the Middle School Morning Mentors at J.D. Parker School of Science, Math and Technology. While middle school students occasionally visit kindergarten classrooms to help students organize their day, Mikayla Pickard works with kindergarten students five days a week. Ms. Jennifer McMahan, kindergarten teacher, counts on Mikayla. If Mikayla is going to be out, she lets Ms. McMahan know a week in advance. Ms. McMahan reported that Mikayla is a natural teacher. Every morning she checks the students' reading homework. On days when Ms. McMahan is out, she directs the substitute and runs the morning meeting where the class has phonemic awareness

activities, rhyming, and read aloud. She is able to help students with sight words and other reading skills. She is kind, caring and always finds time to give them one-on-one attention. Mikayla is a bright and active honor roll student with a diverse set of interests. Her confidence, skill and history of dedication make her an excellent candidate for this award.

### **Region III – Adult**

#### **Volusia County**

#### **Christina Garry**

A sixteen year veteran volunteer at Edgewater Public School, Christina (Tina) Garry's vision goes beyond routine volunteer tasks by providing opportunities for students to become involved in making a difference within their community. Eight years ago, she initiated an annual, "Thanksgiving Feast" which allowed students to have a free Thanksgiving Day dinner with their families. This year, she organized "Make a Change Day" where students and staff collected change for the local food bank. Currently, she is spearheading the school's "Hi-Five Program" enabling 40 underprivileged children to take nutritious food staples home over the weekend. As if all these projects weren't enough, she also organizes a "Back to School Give-a-Way" where she solicits new clothing and school supplies from local businesses and individuals to be used by students and teachers. Tina volunteers approximately 30 hours each week and is regularly seen helping in the office, media center and guidance department. She also provides individual assistance to special needs students at the local high school.

### **Region III – Senior**

#### **Osceola County**

#### **Joan Bogle**

After retiring from 25 years of teaching, Joan continues to share her passion and love of literacy with the students of Narcoossee Elementary as a volunteer. In just the past year and a half, she has spent over 634 hours serving the students in a variety of ways: as a Bookmark Buddy mentor to an at-risk third grade student building reading skills; as a caring adult guiding and reinforcing critical reading skills with kindergarteners; and providing an extra set of hands in the school's media center and classrooms. Joan once saw a need and was happy to help a former coworker and friend who badly injured her leg just before the first day of school. It was impossible for the teacher to prepare her kindergarten classroom for her incoming students. Joan not only made sure that the classroom was ready, but she was waiting at the door during Open House and on the first day of school with a smile on her face. She continued to show up daily to help her friend until she recovered and was able to return to school. The positive impact that Joan has made at Narcoossee Elementary has been far-reaching and immeasurable.

**Region IV – Youth**  
**Hernando County**  
**Jessica Doolittle**

Jessica Doolittle is a talented high school senior. At a young age, she had compassion to help those in need. In 2004, Jessica and her brother were invited to sing at a fundraiser for a toddler diagnosed with brain cancer. Soon after, they established their own children's charity. In 2005, they gave their first freewill offering concert. In 2006, "Kids Helping Kids, Shawn and Jessica Doolittle Charity Fund, Inc." officially became a registered non-profit organization. Soon after, the Doolittle family organized a free after school program for students that included dance, guitar, piano, and vocal training. Jessica has personally volunteered countless hours teaching vocal training and dance in this afterschool program.

**Region IV – Adult**  
**Pinellas County**  
**Anna Rouse**

Anna Rouse, a volunteer at Sexton Elementary School, in Pinellas County, has been a long time advocate for safety, initiating the "Walking School Bus" program. She also participated as a member of the school's Safety and Transportation Audit Committee. Anna chaperones on field trips, helps check students' homework, and assists with the construction of the school wide "Bully Prevention" quilt. Anna was trained as a proctor for MOAT (Math Operations Assessment Testing) and FCAT Testing. She assists with stamping newly arriving textbooks, delivering items to teachers' classrooms, folding and preparing welcome letters for mass mailing, and directing parent questions to the appropriate staff. Anna can always be counted on however needed. Anna volunteers with a passion for children, a warm smile on her face, generosity of spirit, and a willingness to do her very best.

**Region IV – Senior**  
**Polk County**  
**Sheldon Katsoff**

Sheldon Katsoff is committed to helping young men succeed in school so they can succeed in life. He began mentoring a high school student five years ago and is now mentoring eleven. He has trained his eighth graders to lead book discussions with sixth graders as part of a weekly Breakfast Club. He has become a volunteer mentor trainer for the district and is responsible for training more than 80 new mentors over the last few years. He believes strongly in financial literacy training and leveraged the resources of Boys and Girls Club to fund Dave Ramsey's financial literacy program for teens which is being taught to middle school students at Mulberry Middle as part of their Career Choice curriculum. In a world where young men find positive role models hard to come by, Mr. Katsoff provides an example of commitment and leadership.

## **Region V – Youth**

### **Palm Beach County**

#### **Keli Hodges**

Keli Hodges, a sophomore at Alexander W. Dreyfoos, Jr. School of the Arts, began her volunteer service while she was in middle school. She and her older brother founded Students Supporting Other Students (SSOS) which is now a service club at her high school. The organization provides students in need with uniforms, summer reading books, school supplies, clothes, and lunch money as well as support with their mathematics, science and language classes. Keli is also an active member of the American Sign Language Club, Speech and Debate Club, the International Thespian Society, and A Prom To Remember (to provide the ultimate prom experience for teens affected by cancer.) Keli has a 4.6 GPA and is ranked first in her sophomore class out of 335 students. She has quite a reputation at school and in the community for lending a helpful hand.

## **Region V – Adult**

### **Palm Beach County**

#### **Kendra Palumbo**

Kendra Palumbo volunteers at Del Prado Elementary and Eagles Landing Middle schools. She serves on both School Advisory Council (SAC) committees, PTSA and PTA, works on fundraising, (including grant writing), assists in the media centers, and coaches several academic games teams. Mrs. Palumbo volunteers on all professional development and teacher work days, as well as diagnostic testing and FCAT testing days. Since the beginning of this school year, she has logged in over 1,680 hours. Mrs. Palumbo is on campus at both schools daily to keep her finger on the pulse of their needs.

## **Region V – Senior**

### **Monroe County**

#### **Ernie Bernal**

Ernie Bernal retired from teaching science at Palmetto Middle School in Miami-Dade County after serving for 35 years and twice being selected as “Teacher of the Year.” He now volunteers with the second graders at Key Largo School, providing unforgettable and dynamic science lessons charged with enthusiasm. From using his skeleton collection to get the kids to remember the 206 bones in the body (remember it’s not just the “humorous”, but the “humorous, Ha, Ha, Ha!”), to teaching the metric system dance, his unique methods of transferring scientific knowledge makes the students treat him like a rock star when he enters the classroom. For the last seven years, Ernie Bernal has brought his own tractor and trailer to take the students on a hay ride where one of the stops is a hardwood hammock as he and a Fish and Wildlife Officer (Erik Steinmetz) present a very colorful lesson on native plants of the Florida Keys. Not only does Mr. Bernal offer his expertise in the field of science, but he has also been very helpful to our teachers by demonstrating excellent teaching strategies.