



Harford County Public Schools

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2009-10 Harford County Public Schools Teacher of the Year Finalists

The 2009-10 Harford County Teacher of the Year will be announced during the school system's Teacher of the Year Banquet on Thursday, April 23rd at 6:30 p.m. at the Bayou Restaurant in Havre de Grace.

Note: Click the link for the photograph and then right-click the image to save it.

Carolyn J. Bendyna
Edgewood High School Mathematics Teacher
Seven Years of Service

Carolyn Bendyna graduated from Salisbury University in 1994 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration concentrating in Finance, International Business, Investments and Entrepreneurship. After working in the business world for several years, she realized she wanted more from her career and made the choice to go back to school. In May of 2002, she graduated from Towson University with a Master's in Teaching, Secondary Education. That same year, she began teaching at Edgewood High School. She is very involved in the Edgewood community because it is where she lives, works and raises her own daughter. She is the School Improvement Team Facilitator, works with the Edgewood Learning Community and coaches both Varsity Field Hockey and Women's Lacrosse. Carolyn has earned 18 credits beyond her Master's degree including coursework on International Baccalaureate training and mathematics. Additionally, she has done work for the St. Francis de Sales and Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd vocational Bible school programs and is a religious education mentor teacher. She has worked with the Harford County Athletic Legislation Committee and is working towards organizing a 5k run in support of the Harford County Special Olympics with the athletic department at Edgewood High School.

Jennifer A. Chandler
North Harford High School English/Journalism Teacher
13 Years of Service

Jennifer Chandler began her journey into the field of education as a student at Susquehanna University, where she graduated in 1996 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a certification in Secondary Education. Two years later, she was accepted as a graduate student at Towson University where she received her Master's degree in Secondary Education in 2001. Being a teacher has afforded her the opportunity to be a member of numerous committees, but three roles of which she is especially proud are as advisor to the Cry of the Hawk newspaper, as founder and coordinator of the Peer Leadership Weekend, and as a member of a PLC responsible for designing and implementing a Contemporary Literature unit. Cry of the Hawk is a school newspaper, the only one in Harford County Public Schools that is 20 pages in length and distributed once a month for ten months. The journalism program at NHHS is one of the largest in HCPS. Additionally, Jennifer serves as the coordinator of the Peer Leadership Weekend, a program unique to NHHS, on which 50 students and 16 teachers go on a three-day leadership development excursion that involves team building, communication, and ropes course activities. Through her Professional Learning Community at NHHS, she and her colleagues have developed and implemented a Contemporary Literature unit, which has served as a catalyst for many new curricular developments being sought in English/Language Arts county-wide.

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Linda E. Chermock
 Patterson Mill High School Mathematics Teacher
 Nine Years of Service

Linda Chermock graduated from the University of Baltimore in 1999 with a Bachelor of Science degree in marketing, earning the Wall Street Journal Award for Excellence, the American Marketing Association Prestigious Award and was inducted into Mu Kappa Tau, the Marketing Honors Society during the commencement ceremonies. She worked full-time in business throughout college and for a short time after graduation before beginning her teaching career at Fallston High School in August 2000. In 2003, she completed her Master's degree in Leadership in Teaching/Secondary Mathematics from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland with a 3.9 grade point average and was inducted into Kappa Delta Pi, the Education Honors Society. She continued teaching math at Fallston High for seven years before transferring to Patterson Mill High School for the school's opening year in 2007. For the past two years, she has also taught geometry during summer school at Aberdeen High School. She has also served on the technology committee, school improvement team, adjunct to the Grading Policy Committee and as a liaison to the PTSA.

Richard Jones
 Fallston High School German Teacher
 37 Years of Service

Richard Jones earned his Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education with a teaching degree in German from the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania in 1972. Several years later in 1978, he completed his Master's of Education in Supervisor and Curriculum from the University of Maryland, College Park and continued his education by earning 30 credits beyond the Master's with a concentration in English at Towson University in 1982. He has also been trained in the Rassias Method of language instruction by Professor John Rassias, Dartmouth College from 1983-84. He is a former co-president of the Maryland Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German and currently he is an adjunct faculty member at the College of Notre Dame of Maryland. During his nearly 38 years of teaching in Harford County Public Schools, he has been or currently services as Department Chair, member of the School Curriculum Committee, chair of the Philosophy Committee and Foreign Language Committee for Middle States Evaluation, member of the Foreign Language Leadership Committee and the World Language Curriculum Writing team.

Amanda S. Koss
 Harford Glen Environmental Education Center Outdoor Education Teacher
 Nine Years of Service

A graduate of Harford County Public Schools, Amanda Koss attended Salisbury State University where she studied elementary education. She student taught three grade levels at Whenaupai Primary School outside of Auckland, New Zealand and graduated cum laude from Salisbury with a Bachelor of Science. She began teaching fourth grade at Prospect Mill Elementary School and after three years, transferred to Harford Glen to pursue her dream of becoming an outdoor educator. After completing her Master's in Elementary Education from Towson University, she is currently working on certification in Administration and Supervision at the College of Notre Dame of Maryland and after completing it in May, she will continue working toward a certification in Outdoor Education. Since arriving at Harford Glen, she has worked with many Eagle Scout candidates to complete projects and is a member of the Harford Bird Club. She was also awarded the Chandler Robbins Scholarship which allowed her to attend an Audubon Ornithology Camp in Maine in the summer of 2006. She has been the HCEA representative for Harford Glen for three years and has been able to significantly increase the overnight stipend for all teachers. She is a member of the Harford Glen Foundation and regularly works with its members on various projects. Harford Glen is currently offering its residential program to over half of the county's fifth graders and she is working with the Harford Land Trust to investigate the possibility of purchasing additional acres on the west side of Winter's Run as a potential second side location to expand the program to all fifth graders. Amanda works with Exelon Corporation to create a field of student opportunity for middle

schoolers at the Conowingo Dam and has helped initiate Exelon's sponsorship of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation Leadership Retreat Weekend for the Student Environmental Summit leaders as well as financial support of the Earth Day celebration. In 2004, she raised \$10,000 worth of sponsorships to purchase 10 new canoes and a canoe rig for Harford Glen.

Monica C. Miles

Fallston Middle School Art Teacher

Seven Years of Service

Monica Miles earned a Bachelor of Science in art education in 2001 from Towson University with a 3.5 grade point average and received cum laude honors. As an undergraduate student, she was on the Dean's List numerous times and received the Maryland Hope Scholarship for education. Monica earned her Master's of Art Education from Towson University in May 2008 with a 4.0 GPA. While pursuing her master's degree, she was asked to pain a fiberglass sculptural butterfly for the beautification of downtown Towson. In May 2008, she was the recipient of a curriculum award for Harford County Public Schools for teaching post-impressionism at the middle school level. Additionally, Monica has established, and leads, the Art Club at Fallston Middle School, is a member of the Art Steering Committee and participates in countywide, school-wide and faculty art exhibits. She has supervised five student teachers from Towson University and furthers her education at museum workshops and field trips offered by the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Walter's Art Museum.

Francine A. Plotycia

Abingdon Elementary School Mathematics Teacher

12 Years of Service

After earning her Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland in 1996 with a 4.0 GPA, she continued her studies and completed her Master's degree in Developmental Reading from Loyola College with a 4.0 GPA in 2001. For the next two years, she earned 30 credits beyond her Master's predominantly in math and science. She is also a Presidential Award recipient in Mathematics, a member of the School Improvement Team, facilitator of the school's Math Professional Learning Community and Math Committee. She has National Board Certification and mentors National Board Certification candidates. After working for 14 years as a full-time home daycare provider, Francine found a love for building relationships with children and went back to college to become a teacher. She chose teaching because she wanted to make a difference in children's lives. She was honored with the Maryland Council of Teachers of Mathematics Teacher of the Year Award in 2003 and the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics in 2004. Her goal has been to help students understand math and enjoy learning about it. She has taken elective math courses and studied how to best teach mathematics so that students would attach meaning to the concepts. Undergoing National Board Certification in 2002 was an intense professional development study for Francine, which involved self-reflection and analysis of teaching. Through this certification process, she has strengthened her teaching methods and become a more effective teacher in meeting the needs of her students.

Kimberly A. Schmidt

Havre de Grace High School Social Studies Teacher

18 Years of Service

Throughout her 18 years as an educator, Kimberly Schmidt has worked to increase student achievement in many ways. In 1991, she graduated from the University of Delaware with a Bachelor of Arts in History Education and began her teaching career as a middle school social studies teacher at Old Court Middle School in West Baltimore. In 1993, she began teaching at Havre de Grace Middle School and earned her Master's degree from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County in 1995 in Historical Studies. In 1996, Kimberly accepted the position of department chairperson at Fallston Middle School where she taught eighth grade U.S. History. From 1997-2005, she served in a variety of central office positions for HCPS before moving to her current role at Havre de Grace High School teaching government and U.S. History where she has been since 2005. Throughout her career with HCPS, she has served on School Based Instructional Decision Making (SBIDM) teams, school

improvement teams, the Maryland Geographic Alliance and the MSDE Reading in the Content Area Task Force. Additionally, she has worked on countywide curriculum development and assessment projects, served on the citizen advisory committee and the Mentor Teacher Network through MSDE. She has also served on the Harford County Public School Central Instructional Leadership Team (CILT) and the Middle School Reform Committee.

Andrew K. Smith

Joppatowne Elementary School Enrichment/Gifted and Talented Teacher

16 Years of Service

Andrew Smith earned his Bachelor of Science in 1992 from West Virginia University in Elementary Education and minor in Special Education. He also earned a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Loyola College in 1999. He began teaching at Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School in 1992, where he stayed for four years teaching special education as well as third and fourth grades. He was involved in several extra-curricular activities including directing an after-school intramural program for floor hockey and basketball as well as coaching a team for Odyssey of the Mind. He transferred to Joppatowne Elementary in 1997 to teach third and fourth grades before becoming an enrichment teacher in 2001. He has coached two Destination Imagination teams, two Maryland Engineering Challenge teams as well as coordinating the direction of several school musicals. For the past seven years, he has served as Teacher-in-Charge for Joppatowne Elementary and is a member of the School Improvement Team and the Instructional Leadership Team. During the summer, he has taught one session of summer school and two sessions of the Maryland Summer Center at Harford Glen.

Angela L. Taddia

Havre de Grace Middle School Health Teacher

Seven Years of Service

Angela Taddia graduated magna cum laude from West Liberty State College in 2002 with a degree in Health and Physical Education. During her time at West Liberty, she was named both the Health and Physical Education Student of the Year for 2002. She recently graduated from Towson University with a Master's degree in Health Science and is currently enrolled in the Administrator Program through Towson University. For the past seven years, she has coached varsity girls volleyball at Havre de Grace High School. She has been a primary contributor to the middle school health curriculum for Harford County Public Schools and has presented the Family Life unit to the General Curriculum Committee and the Family Life Committee. Angela was also the first to pilot the Middle School Family Life Unit in both seventh and eighth grades. She is a member of the assessment team and wrote the eighth grade county assessment for health, which will be piloted at Havre de Grace Middle this year. Additionally, she is a member of the Health Steering Committee, the PBIS team and is a STARS group advisor. Angela is also a mentor teacher and has completed interactive whiteboard training. She was named Coach of the Year by the Baltimore Sun for 2005 and 2006 and was named Female Coach of the Year by the Aegis in 2006.