

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 9, 2024**

## **Harford County Public Schools Announces Teacher of the Year and more at Celebration of Excellence in Education**

*Recipients from all aspects of education in Harford County Public Schools*

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) is proud to announce eight winners recognized at the Celebration of Excellence in Education. These eight professionals come from all aspects of education in HCPS and dedicate their professional lives to the education of Harford County students:

Teacher of the Year: **Erica Richardson**, *Joppatowne High School*

Principal of the Year: **Ronald Wooden**, *Old Post Road Elementary School*

Assistant Principal of the Year: **Tara Sample**, *Riverside Elementary School*

Custodian of the Year: **Harvey Cage**, *Havre de Grace Middle School*

Facility Worker of the Year: **Donald “DJ” Smacher**, *Plumbing Crew Chief, Operations – Facilities Maintenance*

Food and Nutrition Professional of the Year: **Ann Garner**, *Satellite Kitchen Assistant, Emmorton Elementary School*

Technology Professional of the Year: **Todd Floros**, *Printer I, Office of Technology and Information Services (OTIS)*

Educational Support Professional of the Year: **Beth Iampieri**, *Paraeducator, Forest Hill Elementary School*

The Second Annual Celebration of Excellence in Education was held on April 9, 2024, at Mountain Christian Church in Joppa. The surprise announcements were made in front of nearly 500 invited guests from all over the county, including school system leaders, administrators, and staff; former and current educators; students; family members and friends; elected officials; and community sponsors.

The evening celebrated everyone who impacts the education of HCPS students. The event began with the induction of Terri Wainwright into the HCPS Educator Hall of Fame. Ms. Wainwright worked for nearly twenty-seven years at HCPS from 1977-1980, then again from 1988-2012 as an English Teacher and a Secondary Mentor Teacher.

“I am very proud of every person nominated for each of these recognitions,” said Dr. Bulson. “These eight individuals have dedicated their professional lives to the betterment and support of our students. They should be applauded for their dedication to the youngest residents of our County. They provide a shining example for all of us to follow.”



**Erica Richardson** is a Social Sciences teacher at Joppatowne High School. She earned her bachelor's and master's degree in Secondary Education from St. Thomas Aquinas College between 1994 and 2000. She is a Department Chair, senior class advisor, and Coordinator of the Homeland Security Program. Mrs. Richardson is a member of the School Performance and Achievement (SPA) Team, Safety and Security Committee and a board member of the Middle States Council for Social Studies. She coaches three athletic seasons and created a committee to support teachers. Mrs. Richardson is also a Harford County Public Schools instructor for Education that is Multicultural and Care and Prevention.



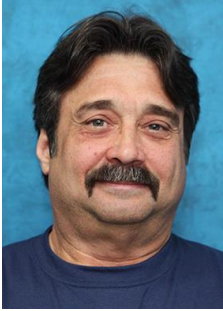
**Ronald Wooden** is a 25-year educator in Harford County Public Schools, serving as a classroom teacher for nine years before becoming a school-based administrator. A Philadelphia native, Mr. Wooden earned his Bachelor of Science from Lincoln University. He is passionate about leadership and earned his master's in Leadership in Teaching from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland. Mr. Wooden is an active member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., serving as the area director overseeing local Alpha chapters in the Baltimore area. He also serves on numerous HCPS leadership teams and committees, advocating for all stakeholders.



**Tara Sample** has been an educator for 22 years, serving her communities with love, simplicity, and gratitude. Mrs. Sample received her bachelor's in education from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and a master's in instruction from Wilmington University. She also holds Elementary Education and Administrator I certifications. Mrs. Sample taught third through fifth grades at schools in Worcester and Harford counties, was the Title I teacher specialist at Magnolia Elementary School and is now the proud assistant principal of Riverside Elementary. Mrs. Sample is a member of the School Performance and Achievement Team and General Curriculum Committee. She was recognized as an Everyday Hero by the Harford County Education Foundation in 2018.



**Harvey Cage** was born in Havre de Grace and graduated from Edgewood Senior High School in 1979. He began his career with the State Highway Administration in 1980 before joining Harford County Public Schools in 1990 as a grounds supervisor. In 2018, Mr. Cage began working as a custodian II at C. Milton Wright High School. He later earned his grade four boilers license and became the chief custodian at Havre de Grace Middle School. Two years later, he became the building engineer at Havre de Grace Middle/High School. In his spare time, Mr. Cage enjoys working on old hot rods and projects around the house.



**Donald “DJ” Smacher** is a graduate of C. Milton Wright High School and Lincoln Technical Institute. He holds a Maryland State Master’s Plumbers/Master Gas fitter license and Second Grade Stationary Engineer Licensure. Mr. Smacher worked with a local plumbing and heating contractor for 23 years and ran his own business doing plumbing and heating evening and weekend service for eight years. He then joined Harford County Public Schools and has been a part of the Facilities Management Department for 16 years. He views his work as a team effort, working with one of the best teams he’s had in his career. He is happily married with two sons, one grandson, and another grandchild on the way. His greatest joy is his family and playing with his grandson.



**Anne Garner** is the Satellite Kitchen Lead at Emmorton Elementary School, where she has been working for nine years. Her role is truly rewarding as it allows her to bring creativity and passion to the kitchen. Making food memorable for students is a valuable endeavor, and Ms. Garner enjoys bringing joy to their dining experience. She likes to craft memorable mealtime experiences by putting a unique twist on menu items and seeing the students’ reactions, which is incredibly rewarding! Ms. Garner has a son named Gonzalo and two rescue fur babies named Cookie and Billy. She loves comic books, pizza, and Star Wars, which is a testament to her youthful spirit and sense of adventure. Ms. Garner is grateful for the opportunity to share her passions with the children at Emmorton Elementary and finds it enriching to pass on knowledge and interest to the next generation.



**Todd Floros** has been working in the printing industry for over 30 years. He began his career managing the print center for the Sparrow Health System in Lansing, Michigan. For the past 14 years, Mr. Floros has been working in the Print Shop of the Office of Technology with Harford County Public Schools. Mr. Floros is happily married to his wife, Heather Floros, an English teacher at C. Milton Wright High School. Together, they have a son, Haydn, and a daughter, Madelyn. Both children are graduates of C. Milton Wright High School and are attending college.



**Beth Iampieri** has been with Harford County Public Schools for 10 years, where she has felt lucky enough to spend all her time at Forest Hill Elementary School. For the last nine years, Ms. Iampieri has worked as an Education Support Professional in the STRIVE Program. She has the wonderful privilege of working alongside other educators in a self-contained classroom. Her students’ needs are unique and, together with her peers, they celebrate their students’ achievements together every day. An educator’s job can sometimes be challenging, but the reward is the reason why Ms. Iampieri loves doing what she does. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her husband, Dave, her children, Emily and Ben, and her dogs, Finley and Adley.

Visit [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org) for more information on all 2024 finalists.

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