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OUTSTANDING DALLAS-AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES HONORED WITH CATHOLIC FOUNDATION WORK OF HEART AWARD

Program honors Catholic school employees for exceptional service at their school, modeling a Christian example, or going above and beyond for a student, family or community

DALLAS – More than 30 outstanding Catholic school employees in the Dallas area received a Work of Heart Award from The Catholic Foundation during the first half of the 2017-18 school year. The Work of Heart Award program, which was established at The Catholic Foundation in 2005 by a family dedicated to Catholic education, recognizes exceptional teachers, administrators and staff of Catholic lower, middle and high schools in the community with a $500 cash award.

"We receive many nominations with inspiring stories of service by these employees who are truly making a difference in their school environment," said Matt Kramer, president and CEO of The Catholic Foundation. "Through the Work of Heart Award program, we hope to show these individuals how much their efforts are appreciated as well as encourage others to model their exemplary behavior."

Catholic school employees can be nominated for outstanding service at their school, modeling a Christian example, or going above and beyond for an individual student, family or community. More than 1,000 teachers, administrators and staff have been recognized since the program's inception.

Ken Kmiec, a physical education teacher at St. Joseph Catholic School in Richardson, was humbled to be nominated for a Work of Heart Award by his colleagues. A parishioner at the church community since 1979 and a teacher at the school since 2002, Kmiec says, "I wanted to give back to the church community by making a difference in the lives of children. By receiving the Work of Heart Award, I know my school community recognizes my body of work over the last 15 years." Kmiec plans to give a portion of his award money to the church.

For Jennifer Everett, the Work of Heart Award represents affirmation that she is doing her job. The science and religion teacher at St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School says, "I feel that what I do is important, but it is nothing more than the right thing to do. I try to find ways to be a good steward of the time and talents God has given me." Everett plans to use her award money to purchase teaching resources and needed uniform items for her children.

Debbie McGowan first fell in love with teaching when she accepted a position as a teaching assistant at Prince of Peace Catholic School many years ago. Now an executive assistant to the principal at Ursuline Academy of Dallas and a recipient of a Work of Heart Award, she says, “I need to thank all those individuals at Ursuline who assist me every day to be the best at my job that I can be. I am very grateful to the Ursuline Sisters, the administration, the faculty, the staff, families and students who make Ursuline a very special place. Receiving the Work of Heart Award reinforces my motivation to lead students in service and continue to share in their spiritual formation and faith.” McGowan wants to put her award money towards her newborn grandson’s future education.

The Work of Heart Award recipients during the first half of the 2017-18 school year are as follows:

- Kathy Bailey, Prince of Peace Catholic School (Plano)
- Jane Borland, John Paul II High School (Plano)
- Charlotte Buford, St. Joseph Catholic School (Waxahachie)
- Paul DiBiase, Bishop Lynch High School (Dallas)
- Cyndi Dumas, Bishop Lynch High School (Dallas)
- Jen Dutra, Prince of Peace Catholic School (Plano)
- Paula Echeverry, Mary Immaculate School (Farmers Branch)
- Jennifer Everett, St. Mary of Carmel School (Dallas)
- Deacon Bill Fobes, Bishop Lynch High School (Dallas)
- Elizabeth Fritts, Christ the King School (Dallas)
- Brandy Gass, Prince of Peace Catholic School (Plano)
- Kimberly Hacker, James L. Collins Catholic School (Corsicana)
- Lisa Hernandez, Cistercian Preparatory School (Irving)
- Ken Kmiec, St. Joseph Catholic School (Richardson)
- Elizabeth Lenzer, Ursuline Academy (Dallas)
- Amy Lucido, St. Patrick School (Dallas)
- Debbie McGowan, Ursuline Academy (Dallas)
- Dana Miller, James L. Collins Catholic School (Corsicana)
- Kim Nguyen, St. Joseph Catholic School (Richardson)
- Michael Ogunbadejo, Bishop Lynch High School (Dallas)
- Yvonne Price, Bishop Dunne Catholic School (Dallas)
- Linda Proe, St. Joseph’s Catholic School (Richardson)
- Dana Rudman, Immaculate Conception School (Grand Prairie)
- Sarah Samples, St. Mark the Evangelist School (Plano)
- Gustavo San Ramon, The Highlands School (Irving)
- Linda Santos, Immaculate Conception School (Grand Prairie)
- Molly Schroepfer, Christ the King School (Dallas)
- Charlene Silverstein, St. Rita Catholic School (Dallas)
- Teresa Valdivia, St. Joseph Catholic School (Richardson)
- Christine Voigt, Bishop Dunne Catholic School (Dallas)
- Delone Williams, Bishop Dunne Catholic School (Dallas)

To nominate a Catholic school employee for a Work of Heart Award, visit catholicfoundation.com. Nominations can be public or anonymous.

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About the Catholic Foundation

The Catholic Foundation is a trusted giving vehicle for the Catholic community. Chartered in 1955, the Foundation was founded by a group of dedicated Catholic laymen with a vision that extended far beyond the charitable needs of the moment. The Foundation has spent decades building a strong community, helping donors fulfill their charitable goals, and preserving the founders' vision and philanthropic legacy. Over the past 56 years, the Foundation has provided more than $148 million in grants to religious, charitable and educational organizations. Today, it manages more than $225 million in assets and houses more than 430 charitable funds and trusts.