

FALL 2019



@ESCNEORH

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Recognizing students, peers & educators

On May 10, students and staff gathered for the 40th Annual Excellence in Education Awards recognizing students with disabilities, peers, and educators, at Woodside Event Center at St. Michael's in Broadview Heights. The event is planned by the ESC of Northeast Ohio and the State Support Team – Region 3. The recognition brunch is an opportunity for educators, teachers, students, and community members to celebrate the great things that are happening in special education today. Students, peers, and educators received awards. Congratulations to the recipients of our local school districts. ■

2019 OUTSTANDING PEER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Luke Hopkins

Cuyahoga Heights High School
Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools



2019 OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Gina Lehmann

Cuyahoga Heights Elementary School
Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools



2019 OUTSTANDING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Damein Neuendorff

Cuyahoga Heights Elementary School
Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools



Kevin Patterson

Independence Primary School
Independence Local Schools



Dominic Presot

Independence Middle School
Independence Local Schools

Cover photo: Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools' administration and recipients of the ESC Excellence in Education Awards

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Educators • Districts • Agencies • Organizations • Universities & Colleges
Students • Adult Learners • Families & Communities • Businesses



FALL 2019

ESC COMMUNITY CONNECTION

ESC OF NORTHEAST OHIO OFFERS CAMPUS AND CORPORATE CONNECTIONS TO LOCAL RESIDENTS

Connecting Educators, Business Professionals and Individuals to Graduate and Corporate Programs.

In 2010, in an effort to provide Northeast Ohio educators with opportunities to participate in a variety of graduate credit programs, the ESC of Northeast Ohio created Campus Connections. For the next few years partnerships and pilot programs with Ashland University, Cleveland State University, Dayton University and Wright State University continued to provide area educators with additional opportunities to participate in a variety of graduate classes and licensure cohorts. Three years later, Campus Connections expanded as Ashland University announced that its new Cleveland Ashland University Center would be located at the ESC of Northeast Ohio. Since then, the ESC has continued to grow Campus Connection by forming additional partnerships with

Ashland University's Cleveland Center and the College of Business, The Center for Educational Leadership at Cleveland State University, Dale Carnegie, Kent State University's Center for Corporate and Professional Development, and Youngstown State University.

Nearly a decade later, Campus and Corporate Connections showcases and provides area educators and business professionals with a variety of learning opportunities and programs. At the state of the art facilities and learning campus, educators, business professionals and individuals can select from a variety of programs and cohorts including a Ph.D. program offered by Youngstown State University, a masters of education and an accelerated principal licensure program offered by Cleveland State University, an accelerated MBA program offered by the College of Business at Ashland University, or an array of adult learning certificate programs offered by Kent State University's Center for Corporate and Professional Development and The Dale Carnegie Institute. ■



For more information about Campus and Corporate Connections, please contact: Paula Kucinic, Director of Professional Development at Paula.Kucinic@escneo.org

INDEPENDENCE LOCAL SCHOOLS' LAND LAB A COMMUNITY GEM

Behind the Independence Board of Education building on Stone Road in Independence is a 50-acre Outdoor Education Center and Land Lab, located at a former Nike missile base. Within the woods are ponds, trails, a pavilion and areas for outdoor education. There also is an indoor education classroom in the board office building. The area is managed by the students of the Biology Society, under the direction of adviser and high school science teacher Scott Maretka. The school hosts numerous events not only for the District's students, but for community and outside organizations. ■



EMPOWERING YOUTH OF TODAY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Now entering its second year, the First Ring Student Leadership Institute provides high school juniors in the first ring schools surrounding Cleveland with the training, experiences and opportunities to become change leaders in their schools and communities. At the heart of the Institute is a focus on empowering youth. Using a research methodology called Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), student leaders learn to recognize and analyze the issues and resources in their communities, and come to understand the forces affecting their lives. Through research and study, they learn to uncover the root causes of these community issues and identify community assets and allies to help address them. Finally, through leadership training, group dialogue, role play and collaboration with adult mentors, students develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to effectively present their findings and recommendations to school and community leaders.

Each summer, principals from First Ring high schools nominate a diverse group of 11th graders to represent their schools and become part of that year's cohort. The Institute convenes four times a year and is hosted by area colleges and universities for three "work" sessions, with a final session to share, reflect and celebrate. During work sessions students engage in a mix of large and small group activities led by a team of adult facilitators including college professors, leadership coaches and area experts from Cleveland State University, district leaders, the ESC and other partners. Students are encouraged to interact with peers from other districts during hands-on activities, ice breakers and meal breaks. Both in and between sessions, each district's team of Student Leaders works closely with adult mentors, who themselves are participants in the First Ring Leadership Academy as teacher leaders and new administrators.

The ESC congratulates the students and teachers from Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools and Richmond Heights Local Schools for their participation last year.



The student leaders at Richmond Heights chose to research the dropout problem at their school. Currently, Richmond Heights has a 81.4% graduation rate over four years, and 81.5% over five years. The students and administration wanted to research what is being done currently and what needs to be done to bring the graduation rate up. Students used a survey to ask students and teachers what they believe needs to be done. They looked at what other schools are doing, as well as the success rates for each of the programs. They have reached out to former students who struggled, and have also surveyed administrators regarding what the current plan is now, and what they recommend as a solution. They hope that their project brings some positive suggestions and change to help all students succeed.

The First Ring Leadership Institute students at Cuyahoga Heights High School wanted to look at stress on the student population. They conducted teacher interviews and used student surveys to collect data. They found that stress is greatly affecting the students at Cuyahoga Heights from overwhelmed freshman entering high school to seniors about to enter college or the work force. Their hope is to strengthen the student/teacher relationship and educate parents to help reduce the level of stress for the students. ■



(From left) Sarah Nolan, Antony Zahtilla, Kyle Calvey, Victoria Kattler and Purva Chauhan, pictured with CSU Graduate Assistant Stephen Sanders. Teacher leader (not pictured) is Gary Miller.

Cuyahoga Heights High School

I have gained a network of neighboring professionals to help address the unique needs of Cleveland area students while helping address the needs of students and communities we are invested in.

- Gary Miller,
Cuyahoga Heights Schools
Technology Teacher

The First Ring Leadership Academy has enabled me to empower students to take issues that matter to them and find solutions that they can act on. This year, we continue the work and have partnered with Rise Up (Richmond Heights 21st century grant-funded after-school program) and Big Brothers and Big Sisters to create a mentoring program based on last year's recommendations and research. I look forward to seeing my students make a lasting impact on their school and community through this program.

- Joshua Patty, Richmond Heights
Secondary School Teacher



(From left) Back Row: Jevontae Jones, Joshua Patty (Teacher Leader), Gbolahan Adio, Front Row: Isaiah Johnson, Nia Griffin, Joshua Johnson

Richmond Heights Secondary School

HUMANITARIAN AWARD RECIPIENTS RECOGNIZED

The ESC of Northeast Ohio named several students as recipients of their annual Humanitarian Awards. Recipients were nominated by administrators in their schools for showing leadership and community service as well as possessing great character during the 2018-19 school year. One student from each middle and high school in the communities of **Cuyahoga Heights**, **Independence**, and **Richmond Heights Local Schools** received scholarships and awards. The awards were presented by ESC board members. In addition to a cash award, students receive a personalized plaque, starfish pin, and starfish bookmark. The starfish is the symbol of a story of the impact one person can make in a community. ■

Cuyahoga Heights Middle School Riley Connors, 8th grade



Throughout her middle school years, Riley Connors consistently has shown concern for others. When situations arise she will ask how she can help. Riley has a strong sense of volunteerism. She seeks opportunities that present themselves and acts appropriately to assist in these situations. Sometimes these matters might seem mundane, like getting paper for a student in need or helping a sick student who's heading home retrieve items from their locker. In the end, Riley's consistent kindness is helping her fellow students and making Cuyahoga Heights a better place.

ESC Board President Christine Krol presented the award.

Independence Middle School Selina Hasrouni, 8th grade



Selina Hasrouni exhibits herself with grace and competence in every class, school club and church activity in which she participates. She volunteers every Saturday at her church, babysitting or collecting donations for those less fortunate. At school, she is a member of Where Everyone Belongs (W.E.B.), Student Council, and the Four-Star Society. She volunteers for iCali, helping the physically or educationally challenged students at IMS. Staff members describe her as being conscientious, respectful and kind, and willing to help others. Selina sees a person for whom he or she really is, and doesn't follow a crowd by joining dangerous or spiteful activities.

ESC Board President Christine Krol presented the award.

Richmond Heights Secondary School Diamond McClendon, 8th grade



Diamond McClendon is a strong, contributing member in academics and community service. She is a thoughtful, hard-working student who lends a mature voice to class discussions. She's definitely a leader, but never one to seek the spotlight; instead, she prefers to stand back and help others excel. Diamond is endlessly patient, kind, and encouraging, unknowingly serving as a quiet role model for all of our students. An honor roll student, Diamond also is Middle School Student Council President. She plays volleyball, basketball and participates in the Rise-Up program after school.

ESC Board Member Tony Miceli presented the award.

Cuyahoga Heights High School Brooke Wilson, Senior



Brooke Wilson is humble in her achievements, caring towards others and a genuine person. She has a positive attitude and even with the incredibly busy schedule she maintains, Brooke begins every activity with a smile on her face and a commitment to give her best effort. Everyone who spends time with Brooke learns something about being a better leader and a better person. Brooke also volunteers her time with the Cuyahoga Heights girls' middle school U 14 soccer team, leading the community's young people in practices in order to increase the depth of their skills.

ESC Board Member Frank Mahnic, Jr. presented the award.

Independence High School Andre Yost, Senior



Andre Yost is an outstanding representative of Independence Local Schools. He is always ready to assist anyone with anything they need. He is one of the "go to" people in the building, and his engaging, genuine personality makes the school a great place. He is leaving a permanent, positive impact on Independence High School. He has more than 1,100 community service hours and is a member of the National Honor Society, Biology Society, Academic Challenge, Student Council, Drama Club, Marching Band and also is a class officer.

ESC Board Vice President Carol Fortlage presented the award.

Richmond Heights Secondary School Jannat Ali, Senior



Jannat Ali has demonstrated leadership, academic success, volunteerism and initiative. Jannat has been driven academically to remain at the top of her class. She has remained a model student by enrolling in College Credit Plus at Tri-C where she is working to secure her Associates Degree. She is a member of the Excel Tech-Medical Technologies program. Jannat is vice president of her medical technology class, and vice president of the youth group of her Mosque. She is a member of the Environmental Club, was treasurer of her sophomore class, and founding member of the Richmond Heights Diversity Club. She has interned with the Cleveland Clinic in the Civic Science Internship Program. Her passion is to become a pediatric oncologist.

ESC Board Member Tony Hocesvar presented the award.