

Newton SEPAC 9th Special Educator Awards



JUNE 2018

Exceptional Staff



Exceptional Staff



- Ms. Kristen Correia
- JSC Transportation

Kristen thank you for all you do to get kids to and from school safely! You and Regina have a Herculean task managing routes and troubleshooting difficulties of all sorts to keep things running smoothly. We appreciate all the work you do!

Exceptional Staff



- Maureen
- Lincoln-Eliot's beloved crossing guard

I walk to school with my big sister and my mom.
Maureen gives me a high five. She told me to wait
for the walk sign and count down from 10.

No problem.

I can do it.

I love it.

Exceptional Staff



- Ms. Regina Moody
- JSC Transportation

Regina thank you for all you do to get kids to and from school safely! You and Kristen have a Herculean task managing routes and troubleshooting difficulties of all sorts to keep things running smoothly. We appreciate all the work you do!

Exceptional Staff



- Joe
- Lincoln - Eliot's beloved Crossing Guard

I walk to school with my big sister and my mom. Joe keeps the cars stopped (sometimes they don't listen.) Joe always asks me, "how was your day sweetie pie"
I love it.

Out of District



Out Of District



- Ms. Tori Bayless
- New England Center for Children

Tori goes above and beyond on a daily basis. She helped smooth the transition from home to residential for our son and family in a selfless and loving manner way that made it so much easier. She is so talented and organized, we are extremely lucky to have had her on our son's team for the past 1.5 years. She will be moving off of his team at some point this summer and we will miss her terribly but will be always grateful for all she has done!

Out of District



- Mr. Bob Owens
- The Learning Prep School

Thank you for all your support and advocacy!
All your creative solutions and counselling
helped, which made you special.

Out of District



- Ms. Theresa Hopp
- The Learning Prep School

We would like to nominate my sons' Literature and Language Arts teacher for a Newton SEPAC award. Her patience is legendary, she uses kindness and reminders to keep the class on track with the challenging material. She is open and honest with corrections to allow questions to develop and the path forward to be explored. She is queen of "gentle reminders" and proves this by getting the best efforts from our son.

Out of District



- Ms. Katie Cerrone
- The Learning Prep School

We would like to Nominate Ms. Cerrone for a Newton SEPAC award for her efforts on behalf of our son. Her kindness and guidance has helped our son navigate the sometimes treacherous world of high school and girls. She is always willing to help with issues and questions as they arise, before they become defeating problems. Her supportive presence simply makes the days better, which just makes the learning easier and more productive.

Out of District



- Ms. Cheryl Baggen
- The Learning Prep School

Science has always been my favorite subject. This year Cheryl has made it fun and interesting by giving a lot of energy to the class and she makes us think out side the box to get the big answers to the questions asked.

Out of District



- Ms. Amy Davidson
- The Victor School

Amy Davidson is a skilled clinician who has made a huge difference in our son's life. She accepts and values him, and meets him where he is, and gradually this has allowed him to trust her. Now, he is more open about his feelings and what he would like to have happen, instead of always trying to please adults. He looks forward to school now, and his attendance and grades have improved considerably. The center of all of this change is Amy's steady and insightful support.

NECP



NEWTON
EARLY
CHILDHOOD
PROGRAM

Ms. Jessica Hull



Ms. Hull is an inspiring teacher, who has been supporting my son everyday. She is always available for us when we have a question. She has gone above and beyond her call of duty.

Ms. Ellen Alperin



My son's mobility has improved tremendously. Thank you for your patience in managing his difficulties and your exceptional care. We truly appreciate for your concern.

Ms. Christina Stagliano



In addition to her depth of knowledge and dedication to her work, Christina shows us daily how she cares for our daughter's developmental progress. She has gotten to know her beyond the diagnosis and school, and has been a tremendous resource for our family. We trust her instincts, and we appreciate her honesty even when it's difficult to hear. She's a great listener. We will miss her next year!

Ms. DeNina Hoque



Miss Nina is a highly gifted teacher. It is hard to express in words the impact she has had on our son as well as the lives of his peers. I am the mother of four children with my oldest just finishing the 9th grade. They have all attended the public schools of Newton and we have had many, many wonderful teachers, but none of them can compare to DeNina. She has a rare gift of being friendly and upbeat while also providing the support and structure they crave. I have been around many educators on a personal and professional level over many years and I've never come across anyone quite like her.

Ms. Sue Fowler-Finn



Sue has been amazing with our son and we have seen such emotional and social growth in him. It's been wonderful to see how happy he is now that he is equipped with the right tools to deal with his emotions. Sue is loving, yet firm and sets boundaries with our son and in turn he trusts her, respects her and wants to follow the rules. She is also very complimentary of our son's strengths and we can tell that she sees the best in him. Our son is thriving in school thanks to the hard work of Sue and her team.

Ms. Anna Atar



Anna is just incredibly patient and wonderful with the kids in her speech therapy group. My daughter has been seeing her the last two years, twice per week and her speech, confidence and progress has been amazing, thanks to Anna's way of teaching. She thinks of really fun projects, which my daughter still enjoys at home, e.g. little hand puppets, etc. She went way out of her way to accommodate our tight schedules to meet up to discuss our daughters needs and process. She helped immensely with tips and always had an open ear if we had questions or concerns. Thank you Anna, we will miss you!

Elementary School



ANGIER

Ms. Elizabeth Ross



Ms. Ross teaches with passion.

Ms. Mary Daskalakis



Ms. Daskalakis has been a great help to our third grader all year. Her time with him has been essential to his development and we are very grateful. She constantly provides him the support to explain assignments to get him started with enough prodding to see him through.

Ms. Fran Rametta



Ms. Rametta has made our child feel comfortable in her classroom and has formed a special bond. She has greatly helped him become a better student throughout the year and we have seen his development grow. She has an acute understanding of our son's needs and learning style and provides the support he requires not only to learn, but to be motivated. This is a very special classroom.

Ms. Alexandria Sells



Lexi has provided home services while our son was in 2nd and 3rd grade. What makes Lexi remarkable is the trusting relationships she has nurtured with all of our family members. Every week, our home's energy changes when she arrives. As parents, we have a partner to problem-solve challenges and celebrate successes. For our son, she provides a critical bridge between home and school so that he is understood holistically. Our preschool daughter looks up to her as a role model. Lexi's unwavering support is imaginative, caring, firm, and often humorous. We will miss her!

Elementary School



BOWEN

Ms. Dianne Bianco



Ms. B has been with our son for the past two years and has been exceptional at keeping him in line and helping him progress academically and socially. She has been remarkably consistent yet nurturing without indulging. There are no words to express her effect on him. We are so grateful!

Ms. Sharon Lipman



Sharon takes the time to figure out what will work for my daughter and when it stops working, takes the time to figure out what's next. She's always willing to put in extra time to help and we know she sincerely wants our daughter to be successful. She never gives up and always remains positive. We don't know where we'd be without her.

Ms. Ainsley Brockmeyer



We are really impressed by Ms. Brockmeyer's love to the kids. Not only is she warm, always accessible and enthusiastic, but a true inspiration for the kids who love learning and sets high expectations for all students.

Ms. Rachel Abraham



I will be submitting nominations for 2 women, Rachel Abraham and Stephanie Baumann. Caring for a child's unique needs is not accomplished by a single person but a team of collaborators that are passionate about what they do - create the most effective environment for a child to thrive academically and socially. Rachel and Stephanie have helped my child communicate his feelings, deal with adversity, develop the ability to be flexible, and understand the importance of having empathy toward others.

Ms. Anna Sibley



Anna is one of the warmest special education teachers we have encountered. She is always positive and patient with the kids who need special education. She always smiles. My son is happy to go to school everyday.

Ms. Sungmi Lee



Sungmi treats kids with special education needs very well. She is always positive and patient with the kids who need special education. She always smiles and hugs my son everyday.

Ms. Sharon Lipman



When M was diagnosed with dyslexia, we were worried about what her academic future would hold. Then, we met Ms. Sharon Lipman. Sharon is an exceptional teacher & human being. She makes learning fun and M always looks forward to their time together. Sharon not only cares about M as a student, but also as a person. When she discovered M's passion for acting, Sharon went on her own time to support M in productions of Beauty and the Beast and My Fair Lady. As M gets ready to move-on to OHMS, I asked her what she will miss most about Bowen. Her response was "Ms. Lipman". We couldn't agree more!

Mrs. Amanda Bixby



When a child has special needs, the adjustment to Kindergarten can be fraught with obstacles - both educational and social. Mrs. Bixby has been nothing short of amazing in helping our child successfully navigate this new environment. She provides him with the perfect combination of support, autonomy, challenge, and encouragement. She seems to know exactly when each is needed, and the results have been amazing - our child has made tremendous academic and social strides this year beyond our wildest expectations. We're forever grateful that Mrs. Bixby is our child's teacher.

Ms. Stephanie Baumann



I will be submitting nominations for 2 women, Rachel Abraham and Stephanie Baumann. Caring for a child's unique needs is not accomplished by a single person but a team of collaborators that are passionate about what they do - create the most effective environment for a child to thrive academically and socially. Rachel and Stephanie have helped my child communicate his feelings, deal with adversity, develop the ability to be flexible, and understand the importance of having empathy toward others.

Elementary School



BURR

Ms. Amy Roberts



My child is different in certain ways and isn't an easy child to manage. We recognize the extra time and effort Ms. Roberts spent working with him and the challenges she had to overcome to interact with him. We appreciate that she never labels him as a difficult child and doesn't walk away. Instead, she always deals with issues as they arise directly, supportively, and constructively.

My child loves school and it's easy to see why. He always has positive things to say about his teacher and the school. We appreciate the teacher tremendously for our child getting individualized attention and a great education.

Ms. Alison Hunt



Ms. Hunt has been exceptional working with my daughter, and she always goes above and beyond.

Mrs. Brianna Russo



Mrs. Russo has a challenge not only teaching the next young students of this world but fostering the growth from toddler to child in preparing these students for the new education life. I have seen her exhibit immense patience and talented skill sets as a teacher.

Ms. Stephanie Asadoorian



Ms. Stephanie is great! In addition to his class teachers, my son chose to nominate Ms. Stephanie.

Ms. Nancy Cairra



My child is different in certain ways and isn't an easy child to manage. We recognize the extra time and effort Ms. Cairra spent working with him and the challenge she to overcome to interact with him. We appreciate her never labeling him a difficult child and walking away but instead she always deals with issues as they arise directly, supportively and constructively.

My child loves school and it's easy to see why. He always has positive things to say about his teacher and the school. We appreciate the teacher tremendously for our child getting individualized attention and a great education.

Ms. Bonnie Wellins



Bonnie keeps braille lessons fun when they could so easily just be a drag and puts in lots of time to have all the materials ready. Our daughter loves working with her.

Ms. Shelby Gitlin



Ms. Gitlin has been working with my kid for 3 years. My kid is different in certain ways. We recognize the extra time and effort she has spent working with him and the challenge she has to overcome to interact with him. We appreciate her never labeling him a difficult child and walking away, but instead always dealing with issues as they arise directly, supportively, and constructively.

My child loves school. He always has positive things to say about Ms. Gitlin and the school. We appreciate her tremendously for our child getting individualized attention and a great education.

Elementary School



CABOT

Ms. Tía Marola



Ms. Marola takes the time to get to know each child really well. She has worked with my son over the past several years at Cabot - and truly understands his strengths and challenges - and how we can support him best. You can really tell that she likes each child genuinely for who they are - and I appreciate that! Thank you!

Ms. Leah Leach



Ms. Leach is always so kind and caring towards the children she works with. She also relates well to the parents, which makes such a difference!

Ms. Laura Michel



Ms. Michel is so kind and patient with the children she works with. She helps them to get organized with their work and to break down projects into smaller, more manageable pieces. She is a positive addition to the Cabot team!

Ms. Lindsey Mallette



Ms. Mallette & Ms. Bowler are an incredible team! We are very grateful that our son had the benefit of their expertise, humor, and kindness for the last two years. They connect with him, value his strengths, understand his needs, and creatively and persistently support his learning style. What a gift they have been to our family. We wish they could follow him to middle school, but we don't want to deprive all the other students!!

Ms. Kathryn A. Bowler



Kathryn Bowler is an outstanding teacher! She is able to inspire and motivate the students every day! She makes school fun!

Ms. Lucy Couture



Lucy Couture is one of the best teachers our daughter has had in her years at Cabot School. Her compassion, unending patience, and understanding have made an enormous difference in our child's life. We appreciate Ms. Couture's hard work and the caring she has brought to every aspect of our daughter's education. Thank you from all of us!

Mr. Stephen McCarthy



Stephen McCarthy is an amazing teacher and person. We have appreciated the incredible support he has given to our daughter this year. His care for her well-being and understanding of her approach to learning has allowed her to grow beyond our expectations. Thank you from all of us!

Ms. Christina DeLuca



When we think of Miss DeLuca, we immediately think of her big smile and positive attitude. She has always been open minded with our child and went out of her way to make sure he succeeds. We could always see her dedication to our son's progress and how much she cared about their relationship. She surely deserves this nomination!

Ms. Alexandra Ahearn



A big Thank you to Miss Ahearn who has been a dedicated BT for our son for this last year. She has been always outgoing, fun, and friendly. She has always created a relaxing atmosphere for our child to help him learn and transition easier during school activities. She has been a great support system.

Ms. Masumí Suenaga



We are nominating Ms. Suenaga simply because she is one of the best BTs out there. She is ready for your child 24/7 and supports him or her no matter what. Her objective is to always strive for our kids and get them to the next level. She won't stop until your child reaches their goals. She is a valuable member of our community.

Ms. Lindsey Mallette



Lindsay Mallette is an amazing teacher!
She is able to motivate and inspire the
students!

Ms. Katie Bowler



Ms. Mallette & Ms. Bowler are an incredible team! We are very grateful that our son had the benefit of their expertise, humor, and kindness for the last two years. They connect with him, value his strengths, understand his needs, and creatively and persistently support his learning style. What a gift they have been to our family. We wish they could follow him to middle school, but we don't want to deprive all the other students!!

Ms. Jade Clune



Ms. Clune is not only an experienced listener but a thoughtful, compassionate, and creative advocate for my child. There are many emotionally intelligent experts capable of generating sound advice, but it's not often does someone actively implement the words. Thank you, Ms. Clune, for being that amazing someone in my child's school life!

Mr. Kenneth Magnone



After teaching my son trombone for a few months, he came up to me on the blacktop after school to say, "Your son is doing great! We do whatever works. We play piano, we sing, we play trombone." He has done everything that works. This year, he met my son weekly before school to let my son set up for band, and they would jam together, with Mr. Mignone on piano and my son on drums. For two years he has mentored my son, taught him music, and made my son feel proud and happy.

Ms. Beth McFadyen



Beth has boundless energy and great enthusiasm for the work she does with our son. She knows what he likes, what he needs to learn, and how he can best learn. She comes to every session with a warm smile and a thorough plan, and she celebrates each accomplishment with genuine joy.

Ms. Masumí Suenaga



Masumí is laser focused on helping our son build skills. She never misses a beat. She always finds a way for him to do one more thing for himself than he had done the week before. With her can-do attitude and her great enthusiasm, she helps our son reach the outer limits of his skillset over and over again.

Elementary School



COUNTRYSIDE

Mrs. Amanda DeForest



At the beginning of the year, we were concerned with our son's progression into 2nd grade, but Mrs. DeForest created a no-nonsense, mature, and helpful structure to help him thrive. Throughout the year she took the time to address us and consult with him on how to mitigate anxieties and behaviors that were beginning to affect his academic life. She worked with us on home practices that could help him catch up in difficult areas like writing and math. Her teaching quality displays a perfect balance of nurture and discipline that motivated our son to keep up with his classmates!

Mr. Mark Siegel



Mark is the first person my son sees every school morning and the last person he sees every afternoon. Regardless of the time of day or weather, Mark greets us with a smile and friendly hello, before guiding students cautiously across our busy street. He doesn't hesitate to put errant drivers in their place for the safety and well-being of Countryside students and families. For a child of special needs, who is wading through the struggles of independence, the feeling of security is invaluable. Mark gives that to us every single day.

Ms. Kate Parker



Kate has done wonders for our son's level of self-confidence this year. He is very prone to negative self-talk and with Kate's constant encouragement, he has learned to look at himself in a more positive light. Kate taught him to look past his daily challenges/struggles and glean a more healthy and promising outlook about himself. This concept has really stuck with him. Nowadays, instead of hearing, "I'm not good at that," we hear, "I think I want to try it," thanks to Kate's supportive teaching.

Ms. Rachele Thivierge



Rachele truly goes above and beyond. She finds new ways to help and include my son every day. She takes an active interest in everything he does including outside of school too. We are so lucky and fortunate to have had her expertise the last two years.

Ms. Dolly Wallace



Dolly has a smile on her face every day we come in. She has welcomed and made my son feel at home in a new school. She has taken videos of him and made sure it got to mom and gran. My son loves to come to school and see her every day.

Ms. Kate Parker



Kate has really taken it upon herself to make all my visually impaired child's worksheets and other materials accessible to him. She has been so helpful in helping him make transitions throughout his school day and has been a kind and patient influence in his day. Kate is part of a wonderful team at Countryside and we are so thankful for her and for them!

Ms. Amy Turner



This year is our first year working with Amy as our son's Inclusion Facilitator. At a recent IEP meeting, my son's recent progress was a topic of conversation. Without Amy, I don't think this could have been fully possible. Whether it's taking the time to work with him one-on-one, helping him navigate bewildering social cues, or making recommendations during IEP meetings for the next year ahead, Amy doesn't hold back. She represents her students with equal amounts of grit and heart, and she has exceeded our expectations throughout the year.

Ms. Edith Goethals



Edie Goethals has been our child's Kindergarten aide this year and has provided such amazing care and support for us. She likely faces new challenges with our child on a weekly basis but she approaches her role with kindness, creativity, and a lot of patience. It has paid off in a big way. We get daily written updates about him, examples of new things that she is trying to do with him, and we've seen incredible results. He really loves school and has exceeded our expectations for his first year in school. I don't believe this would've happened without someone like Edie!

Ms. Christina Colon



Ms. Colon does an amazing job of providing the strategy, structure, and communication we need to make sure our child is successful in school. One thing that may get overlooked when thinking of teaching professionals is the way they interact with parents. She is the easiest person to approach, talk to, and give feedback to at any moment of her busy week. She will spend as much time as necessary addressing our concerns, providing new ideas, and really following through. Our child loves school and she has gone a long way in providing a foundation for him to be very successful.

Ms. Elizabeth Herlihy



Beth does an outstanding job of setting a tone of "kindness" in the school. Her genuine, positive, and caring attitude, along with her compassion and her investment in her role, shines throughout the school. You can see it in the staff, students, and the entire countryside community. Thank you Beth!

Ms. Rachele Thivierge



Truly committed to her students and offers a tremendous amount of support not only to them but the families of the students as well. There is no second guessing the trust, commitment, care and knowledge she exemplifies in her role as special education teacher!

Ms. Lori Franzella



Lori goes above and beyond giving her students the one-on-one help, support, and encouragement they need to help reach their goals. She has such a positive attitude and her door is always open if you had any questions or concerns regarding your child or loved one.

Thanks for all you give, Lori!

Ms. Lauren Magann



Lauren Magann is a thoughtful, knowledgeable, and dedicated behavioral therapist who's been working with our son for the past two years. Day after day, she patiently and relentlessly helps our child succeed. Quietly and calmly, she guides our son, taking pride and joy in his every little achievement. Whether it's a small victory like finding courage in himself to check out an age appropriate book from the library, or a bigger accomplishment like completing a report with his own drawings, he could not have done it without Lauren's support. We are very lucky to have her in our son's life.

Ms. Stephanie Hollowell



Stephanie Hollowell is not only a wonderful and experienced behavioral therapist, but she is also one of our son's most favorite people in the whole school. She's been tirelessly working with our kid for the past two years making his school life more productive, fulfilling, enjoyable, and fun. In addition, she's been patiently guiding our child at improving his chess skills and facilitating chess games with other kids. We are deeply grateful to her for making these invaluable social experiences and enrichment opportunities possible for our son! Thank you, Stephanie, for being there for him!

Ms. Amy Turner



We've been extremely lucky to have Amy Turner as our son's inclusion facilitator for the past two years, and this is our second time nominating her for this award. She is a knowledgeable, talented, hardworking, and skillful educator. Amy's boundless empathy and compassion towards students and families make her a truly outstanding teacher. She cares deeply about the kids and roots for them with all her heart. Amy is incredibly good at understanding their perspectives and their unique points of view, and she always, without a fail, finds something positive and encouraging in every situation.

Ms. Lori Franzella



Lori Franzella is a talented, observant, creative, knowledgeable, and intuitive speech therapist who's been tirelessly working with our son for the past four years. We can't even begin to describe how big and important of a role she plays in our son's development and growth. Lori patiently and skillfully helps him overcome his many challenges. As our kid grows, her lessons evolve too, taking him to the next level. We are deeply grateful for all the progress that our child makes under Lori's watch. New skills he learns with her will last a lifetime.

Elementary School



FRANKLIN

Ms. Bola Lareau



Ms. Lareau was introduced into my daughter's class halfway through the year and has been a godsend.

Mr. Casey Dolan



My daughter's primary fifth-grade teacher is patient, kind, funny, and the perfect match for her spirited nature.

Mr. Joel Jocelyn



When Joel Jocelyn first came on as Principal at Franklin Elementary School in 2016, he identified “improving school culture around Inclusion” as a top priority. His vision included a celebration of diversity, and an acknowledgement of our responsibility to all the children in our community. In working with Mr. Jocelyn on the Inclusive School Committee, we always felt his kindness, generosity of spirit, humility and deep caring for all students. We are grateful to Mr. Jocelyn's leadership in making our school a more inclusive community.

Ms. Kara Temple



Ms. Temple and Ms. Beatrice run their fourth grade co-taught classroom at Franklin School with kindness, love, and a great sense of fun and good humor. They are truly dedicated to the learning and social needs of every student. When "unexpected behavior" occurs, they get to the underlying cause and help each student find a way to be successful. My son thrived in their classroom. Ms. Temple and Ms. Beatrice created conditions that allowed him to connect in deep and positive ways with his classmates.

Mr. David Wright



David has been a source of inspiration and support for our son as well as for us parents. He is very pro-active in communicating with us as well as in finding resources for expanding our son's skills. We also appreciate and laud his creative problem solving skills.

Ms. Michelle Beatrice



Ms. Temple and Ms. Beatrice run their fourth grade co-taught classroom at Franklin School with kindness, love, and a great sense of fun and good humor. They are truly dedicated to the learning and social needs of every student. When "unexpected behavior" occurs, they get to the underlying cause and help each student find a way to be successful. My son thrived in their classroom. Ms. Temple and Ms. Beatrice created conditions that allowed him to connect in deep and positive ways with his classmates.

Ms. Brianne M. Tiffany



Ms. Tiffany slipped into her new role with our son with a lot of patience, dedication and preparation. Her attention to detail in enhancing our son's daily classroom experience has been exceptional. We also very much appreciate her thoughtful and timely communication with us.

Ms. Samantha Rautenberg



In addition to having 17 other students under her care as the class teacher, Ms. Rautenberg makes special effort to support our son's inclusive experience at Franklin. We also laud her encouraging his classmates to accept and appreciate our son's strengths and also to foster friendships.

Ms. Emily Petrie



Ms. Petrie, our son's aide, has been one of his greatest advocates for the last three years. She holds him accountable, reinforces him positively, and always reminds him how capable he truly is. With her help, he has grown enormously through the three years she has been in his classroom and at his summer camp. She always provides us with clear communications regarding school work and behaviors and has gone the extra mile by dressing up with him on theme days, etc. There isn't enough space to express how grateful we are for her!

Ms. Teresa Swanson



Occupational Therapist Teresa Swanson has been there to support our daughter from her first days of kindergarten, when our little darling yelled, "WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU??" when Ms. Swanson innocently asked her to write her name, helping her gain fine motor strength and spatial planning in order to complete grade-level work. Our daughter, who is now a very polite third grader, has the soul of a writer and Ms. Swanson has helped her put pen to paper to express herself.

Ms. Nicole Gallagher



What can you say about a person who shows up every single day to teach your child with creativity, hope and understanding? Ms. Gallagher is relentless at finding ways for our son to achieve day after day despite the obstacles. The pride that shows on our sons face when he completes a math problem or reads something new is a gift you cannot repay. It is truly remarkable to watch someone who has found their calling. It is an understatement to say thank you.

Elementary School



HORACE
MANN

Ms. Rose Mariano



Rose has gone above and beyond to help the children living in our program. She goes out of her way to make sure all of the kids are taken care of academically and emotionally when they are at school. Another beautiful quality about Rose is that she is beyond wonderful to the mothers in our program. Rose goes out of her way to talk to and tell our mothers how much of a wonderful job they are doing. She is truly special and we are lucky to have her be part of our community!

Ms. Kelli Stanton



Kelli began working with my son midway through the school year and the change in him has been dramatic. He went from struggling daily to happily running off to school where he participates in everything and genuinely loves it. His challenging behavior has diminished profoundly. The confidence Kelli has instilled in him, the trust he has in her, and her way of setting firm boundaries while still having fun with him are a huge part of his success this year. We are so grateful to her!

Mr. Marc Nardelli



Mr. Nardelli is more than a principal to the students at Horace Mann. He is the person that comes out to the car when a child is having a hard time going into school, he is the person that sits with a child when they're having a bad day, and he is the person attending all of the meetings and giving feedback about the child's academic and emotional needs. Mr. Nardelli is very special to the kids in our program. Our kids excelled this year because of the work Mr. Nardelli and his team have done! Words cant explain how much we appreciate him.

Ms. Lisa Seyferth



Ms. Seyferth, my child's K teacher, understands my child's strengths and needs. She finds ways to minimize my child's shortcomings and bring out her best.

Together with the Special Ed team and an exceptional principal (Mr. Nardelli) my child has transitioned to K and blossomed in her classroom much more than we could have hoped for.

Ms. Marita Rosen



Marita Rosen, our son's classroom teacher, has been so consistently sensitive and diligent in supporting our son as he works to overcome his reading disability. In addition to being his strong advocate for special services, Ms. Rosen has provided us with valuable assistance through structured homework assignments including helpful tools that keep him interested, energized, and feeling special! Most important, she has been very sensitive and effective in assuaging his anxieties and building his self esteem as a student. Marita delivers this support with so much warmth and a great sense of humor.

Ms. Ashley Mosley



Ashley has gone above and beyond for our son this year. With her 1:1 support, he has learned so many valuable new skills, especially social. One example that comes to mind is recent: when Ashley saw how much our son enjoyed playing with a couple of Beanie Babies in his classroom, she brought in her own personal collection from home to share with him. She made it clear that they were for him AND his friends. Since then, he has invited other children to play Beanie Babies with him daily and has had so many wonderful interactions his classmates as a result.

Mr. Mark Nardelli



My son is in First grade and has had major issues with anxiety around school. He has had behavioral and learning issues with ADHD. Mr. Nardelli has come out to the car and carried him in, helped him calm down during physical tantrums, and has been such a positive influence on my son. I honestly do not know what we would have done this year without Mark's patience, determination, kindness and help.

Ms. Toyin Shekoni



Despite joining later in the school year, Toyin immediately formed a wonderful friendship with our daughter and made great gains in helping her increase attentiveness and engagement in school. Her passion for helping kids is palpable from the way that she interacts with them and the way that she approaches her work. We always look forward to reading her daily e-mail summaries, as she fills them with details and fun anecdotes that give us such useful insight into our daughter's day. We are very lucky to have Toyin as part of our daughter's special ed team!

Ms. Katie Deehan



Katie has been working with our child day in and out in the past two academic years, and rather than our child tiring of their time together, our child looks forward to it and feels genuinely engaged by Katie. Our child has made terrific progress from Katie's expert, kind, engaging approach. Katie has been an invaluable partner in our child's education to date.

Elementary School



LINCOLN-
ELIOT

Ms. Nicole Caldwell



Nikki is a fixture at our school for special education kids. She is always cheerful, positive and helpful. I have never witnessed her getting flustered or out of control in tough situations. She is a truly gifted aide.

Ms. Lindsey Caldwell



Lindsey is a gifted inclusion facilitator at Lincoln-Eliot. Her "we can do it" attitude always gets us through challenges. She is a straight-talking no-nonsense achiever who makes magic happen. Lindsey is also approachable, incredibly friendly and the kids see her as a "go to" person when things are rough. I wish we could make copies of her!

Ms. Allyson Andrews



Allyson is the reason Lincoln-Eliot is an amazing school for kids with special needs. She has put together a great team of hard working, smart professionals that make our kids feel comfortable, confident and important. Our school is one in a constant state of change but Allyson has made the impact on our special ed population almost nonexistent. She is always present, always engaged and very approachable. I see Allyson as a leader in the Newton education community - her critical thinking is top-notch, she can build consensus and achieve in difficult situations. We're lucky to have her!

Elementary School



MASON RICE

Ms. Amanda Baranowsky



You can walk a thousand miles with the flashlight in your hands day and night, and you won't find such a dedicated teacher like Miss Baranowsky. Thanks to her hard work, our son was able to pick up his math and English and take the real MCAS this year for the first time! He has grown and matured so much that we are happy beyond words! She is a real treasure for our school district as she will fight for your child until the end, and she never gives up. Her heart goes all the way to the moon and back for our children. We were just lucky to have her educate our child.

Ms. Alexandra McManama



Ms. McManama makes every child feel comfortable and valued in her classroom. She gives individualized support to each student who needs it, but allows them to accomplish as much as they are capable of on their own. She never gives up on them.

Ms. Melissa Rice



Melissa, thank you so much for your creativity, attentiveness, patience and warmth. Not only do you do so much for our kids every day you spend at Mason Rice, we also really appreciated the amount of effort and planning that you put in to the transition process while you were out on maternity leave. It could not have been more seamless--but we're also really glad to have you back!

Ms. Stephanie Asadoorian



Stephanie, you are amazing! Your amazing skill, warmth, patience, creativity and attention to detail is unparalleled. We feel so at ease knowing that you are working with our daughter, and her communication skills have come so far during her time with you! We are constantly hearing from so many different staff members at the school how amazing you are, and how lucky we are that our daughter has you as her speech therapist!

Ms. Donna Thayer



Donna, we cannot tell you how much your open, honest, and frank input into different students' learning challenges has been appreciated by so many families in your class this year. You are creative in your approach to each child, and always filled with warmth and humor that keeps our kids engaged. We will all miss you next year!

Ms. Kim Shames



Kim, thank you so much for taking so many children under your wings this year! You are always pleasant, responsive and eager to engage. Our son has so much fun working with you, and the work you do has made a dramatic difference not only on his reading skills, but in his lust for learning!

Ms. Michelle Coughlin



Michelle, you have been such a gift! Our daughter and our whole family could not have been more blessed to have had you in our daughter's life these past three years. You are patient but tough; smart by empathetic, and most of all so incredibly focus on helping our daughter to succeed to the fullest extent of her abilities! We are forever grateful for all you do!

Ms. Jennifer Bailey



Thanks to Jen Bailey for always having a smile on her face, and for putting the kids before everything else. We know her plate was overflowing this year, but she did everything possible to make sure no kiddo felt the impact of her busy schedule. Mason Rice is so lucky to have Jen!

Elementary School



MEMORIAL
SPAULDING

Ms. Cindy Basso



Dear Cindy, Thank you for the phenomenal work that you do with my three children. All three of them adore you and we are lucky to have such a wonderful and caring person on our IEP Team. Thank you for being so responsive to all the concerns that come up at home and providing guidance. We truly appreciate all that you do!

Mrs. Melissa Lewit



Dear Mrs. Lewit, Thank you for being such a wonderful and caring teacher for our daughter. We see so much improvement from this year and you definitely went above and beyond the general education curriculum to facilitate all the social skills learning and were on top of her medical needs as well. Thank you and we truly appreciate all your hard work.

Ms. Kim Meredith



Miss Meredith is a fantastic teacher, always on top of our child's needs. We were lucky to have her teach our child two years in a row and we realize all the gains that were made in the last 2 years. Thank you for all your hard work!

Mr. Tom Morris



Tom Morris is a wonderful principal who spends great amount of time on special education needs of the children in his school. Having three children in Memorial Spaulding, we see that Tom is fully engaged in each of their classrooms and various needs. We are lucky to have such a great principal.

Ms. Mattison Giroux



Transitioning to school is a daily nightmare for my youngest. Getting out of the car can be a traumatizing experience leading to daily disaster. But having Ms. Giroux's glowing smile greet us at the Blue Zone has been a blessing for our family. Ms. Giroux greets my child with enthusiasm, understanding and patience. She literally sets the tone for his entire day and as such, has been a huge part of his success. Thank you Ms. Giroux for making each day infinitely better!

Ms. Kim Vanaman



Ms. V.'s nomination is a Lifetime Achievement Award for the work that she was done with my son for 3 years as his BT. She always greeted him with a smile, believed in him and his abilities, presumed competence, and guided him with a gentle, yet firm hand throughout his day. We, as parents, knew that we could count on Ms. V. to be the strongest advocate for our son. Ms. V., we feel lucky to have worked with you!

Ms. Emma Zampese



Miss Zampese is an exceptional teacher who truly loves children and gives them their heart. She teaches them to be independent thinkers and more importantly great human beings, respectful and smart thinkers.

Elementary School



PEIRCE

Ms. Kara Smith



Our son entered the Peirce school as a kindergartner to brand new parents, halfway through the year. Our son was in a period of transition and Kara Smith was our rock during this time. She took the time to get to know us as a family, help us with understanding our son's academic goals, ed planning, and more. She explained the unfamiliar terminology to us and was a much-needed cheerleader for our "instant family's" success- both at home and school. Her expertise, support, knowledge, and kindness helped us through a challenging time.

Ms. Brittany Hagopian



Miss H has aided our son in finding his voice and place in kindergarten. Her calm, upbeat demeanor is reflected in his approaches to challenges and problems. She doesn't sugar-coat behavior issues and is quick to help us identify links between things outside of school and school. Our son trusts her and respects her. One thing we adore: how much she champions our son's accomplishments, big and small. We can FEEL her excitement when he meets or exceeds a milestone- it is encouraging to all of us. Miss H is a big part of our son's rapid success at Peirce.

Elementary School



UNDERWOOD

Ms. Yole Magloire



Ms. M. has spent every day of the academic year making sure the my son feels welcomed at school. She has proactively engaged my son's peers on his preferred activities to guarantee that he has a group of friends. She knows him well and works collaboratively with me to ensure he reaches his maximum potential while feeling loved for whom he is. We are extremely grateful for all the work that Ms. M. has done with our son this year.

Ms. Lucy Keeney



Ms. Keeney has devoted a fair amount of time and energy this academic year to learning the best techniques on how to integrate a child with autism in a classroom. She has modified curriculums, activities, and even the structure of the classroom to make sure that our son reached his maximum potential while feeling loved for whom he is. My son enjoys school tremendously thanks to the work of Ms. Keeney. We could not be more grateful for all her work.

Ms. Meredith Green



Ms. Green is the inclusion specialist for my son. She has been instrumental in creating of team of support that best caters to his needs. We have maintained weekly communication, and she has facilitated countless meetings to modify my son's interventions as new needs emerged during the academic year. Ms. Green understands how team work should look like and had worked tirelessly to ensure a coordinated effort towards my son's success. We are deeply grateful for her work.

Ms. Greta Phillips



We were new this year to Underwood, and Ms. Phillips has been an extraordinary addition to my child's success. Ms. Phillips seamlessly took our child from English fluent in some areas to excelling. She met her exactly where she needed to and gave her timely skills that made a remarkable difference in her writing. My child has some additional challenges in school, and Ms. Phillips went above and beyond being a champion in the classroom and advocating for her needs with others. Ms. Phillips' innate sense of what kids need is awesome, she is creative, energetic, and has so much patience.

Ms. Megan Murphy



How to say it in 600 words...this teacher is an angel sent from Heaven! Ms. Murphy goes above and beyond on every level.

She is kind, thoughtful and so competent. She has an incredible way with the kids. My child has extra needs, and Ms.

Murphy has been wonderful. She is willing at every turn to adjust, think out of the box, and extend helpful suggestions. She is so talented at knowing what a kid needs and what might work. Ms. Murphy is able to create an environment that is friendly to kids with so many different needs, wow, there are just not enough words to say how wonderful our year has been!

Ms. Caroline Olwell



Caroline Olwell has a smile like sunshine. She considers problems in a very thoughtful way. When my child came to this class, she felt that the class environment and the students were warm and friendly.

Elementary School



WARD

Ms. Courtney Chase



My son had a challenging year, and Ms. Chase transferred classrooms to be his aide late in the school year. Her positive attitude, ability to quickly build trust, and supportive nature made all the difference for my son and helped him get back on track.

Mr. Joseph Barrett



Joe was critical in setting up the behavioral plan to help stabilize our son. He focused on detail, metrics, and met with us many times at school and in our home to help us be partners with the plan and answer all our questions. He helped with the transition between BTs late in the year (and that transition was a success as well)! We are grateful to Joe for our son's positive Grade 1 experience!

Ms. Courtney Chase



Courtney Chase played a critical role in stabilizing our son in the class room. Her dedication, patience and skill were critical in his successful Grade 1 experience. She helped make school fun again for our son and her focus on communication with the parents helped us all work as a team.

Elementary School



WILLIAMS

Ms. Joanna Sorensen



Joanna has been an integral part of my son's progress at the Williams school. Her patience and dedication to the successes of her students is unreal.

Elementary School



ZERVAS

Mr. Barry Murphy



Barry,

Thank you so much for your dedication to my son.

You understand his challenges and support him through hard times. He was relieved to have you by his side when he needed a lot of physical help. He felt a strong connection with you. He loved having conversations with you about everything from sports to cats (thanks to you, he wants to adopt two kittens now.) Your calm, yet encouraging manners helped him with self-confidence in school work and relationships with his peers. Thanks for being a kind soul.

Lynn Chachkers, Ph.D



Dr. Lynn worked hard with my son during his psychological evaluation. She did a fantastic job evaluating his behavioral, general cognitive abilities, verbal and nonverbal reasoning abilities, strengths and weaknesses... she explained it in her report, which was easy to understand.

Mr. Jay Coughlin



We met Jay for the first time at Zervas for my son's clinic meeting. Even though he only recently started working with my son, I can tell the bond they created. When I mention gym to my son, he starts laughing and running to show me how fun it is, and this is because of Jay.

Ms. Jailyn Marshall



Jailyn has been working hard on creating a program that will work with my son to eat better and stop his flopping, crying/whining. She came to our house during the parent training to show us how we can apply the program she created. Also, during our clinic and annual meeting, I can tell from her report how she loves working with him. In addition, she always has a smile on her face.

Ms. Deborah Vittner



Deborah has been working hard with my son on his fine motor skills. She taught him how to hold a pencil and write, how to open his lunch box, how to zip his jacket and many more. Deborah taught my son so many little things that we take for granted, but that were hard for my son. Also, during our clinic and annual meeting, I could tell from her report how she loves working with him. She always has a smile and welcoming face all the time and knows my son very well.

Ms. Susanne Brueggeman



The first time we met Susanne was in September 2016 at Countryside school under the ABA program. She has been working hard with my son on his speech for over two years and going great every day. She know what tools to use in helping him with his speech and teaches him how to request things that he needs. Also, during our clinic and annual meeting I can tell from her report how she loves working with him. She always has a smile and welcoming face all the time.

Ms. Pasquale Paola



My daughter adores Pasquale. Her emotions can get the best of her, but he is always patient, kind, and warm. She used to be afraid of getting on the van because she would have seizures on the way home from school, but with Pasquale next to her, she feels safe.

Nurse Deana Saleme



Nurse Deana does an exceptional job treating kids at school. She takes time to get to know each child which allows her to more accurately treat and diagnose. One of my children suffers from severe seasonal allergies, and Nurse Deana is sympathetic and helpful, even working with the staff to keep windows and doors closed during the peak pollen season. For our other son, she accurately diagnosed a fractured hand and advised us to immediately seek an x-ray. We trust her, and the kids love her.

Ms. Clare Rice



My daughter absolutely loves Clare. She has a lot of anxiety about going to school, and it can be very hard to get her ready and on the van. One "how's it going, girlfriend?" from Clare, and the tears are gone. She's all smiles, and she can't wait to start her day. Clare also has the kindest heart. My daughter has a lot of complex medical needs, and with that come worries for her, and she will talk to Clare and feel better. Clare always remembers when my daughter has a major test or surgery coming up, and when Clare asks how she's doing, or how it went, it means everything to her.

Ms. Jasmine Sumrall



Ms. Sumrall is not my daughter's aide, and yet she still takes the time to calm her anxiety, take rest breaks with her, and help her feel special. Ms. Sumrall makes our daughter feel important and loved. This kind of attention and kindness is extraordinary, and our family is so grateful.

Ms. Jacquelyn Doyle



Ms. Doyle is a real life Disney princess. She is kind, warm, and always has a smile and a hug for my daughter. She is the reason that my daughter wants to go to school in the morning, and the reason that every Saturday night, she asks me "how many more sleeps until Monday?" In my daughter's words "Ms. Doyle is my friend. She plays games and is a good sport. I love her."

Ms. Lucy Methven



Somehow Ms. Methven is able to approach every day with equal parts enthusiasm and patience! She is able to deftly weave in small accommodations for my son to make the curriculum challenging and fun but never overwhelming. This year has been an overwhelming success even though he was at a brand new school with all new peers. We were absolutely wowed with how she came up with thoughtful and unique solutions around the MCAS testing and field trip to Plymouth.

Ms. Meghan Rogers



With her calm energy and patience, Meghan has made a real difference in my son's ability to function in school. When she started, he was hardly ever in class due to difficulty with self-regulation. Now, at the end of the year, he is in class all day and participating more than ever.

Ms. Michele Kibrick



Michele has been taking care of my son for the whole school year. When we have the parent training she goes out of her way to make us learn and apply to my son's daily life. She is such an amazing therapist. In addition, always has a smile on her face, which makes us to feel like a family and work together.

Ms. Maura E. Greer (Hickey)



Maura just amazes me how she keep up with all the special kids that she has to manage and knows my son extremely well and cares for him very well. When we have a meeting, hearing her talking about my son makes feel great knowing he is going to this school under her care. The other big thing is always she has a smile on her face.

Mr. Tim Stefaniak



From greeting my child on the playground every morning to helping him learn fun facts about science, Tim meets my child where he is and helps him to succeed. He has gotten to know my child and his needs extremely well, and streamlines my child's day so that he can participate in school as much as he does. My child's days at school would not be possible without Tim. We are so thankful to him.

Ms. Jasmine Sumrall



Maggie and Jasmine's dynamic approach to our son's education has been exceptional. They find the natural balance of holding high expectations while also depicting a deep knowledge of his individual needs. We are incredibly grateful for their endless passion, hard work, dedication, kindness, patience, persistence, and sense of humor. This work is evident not only in the strong connection our son feels with each of them, but also in his ongoing love of learning and positive outlook. Its with sincere gratitude, that we nominate them for this award.

Ms. Maggie Williamson



Maggie and Jasmine's dynamic approach to our son's education has been exceptional. They find the natural balance of holding high expectations while also depicting a deep knowledge of his individual needs. We are incredibly grateful for their endless passion, hard work, dedication, kindness, patience, persistence, and sense of humor. This work is evident not only in the strong connection our son feels with each of them, but also in his ongoing love of learning and positive outlook. Its with sincere gratitude, that we nominate them for this award.

Middle School



F.A.D DAY

Ms. Mary Sheehy



Ms. Sheehy put all my fears to rest and surpassed all expectations when taking over for a maternity leave as the lead teacher of the 7th grade LLD program! She quickly got to know my son and earned his trust. She is keenly aware of his social-emotional needs as well as his specific learning needs. He feels safe talking with her about how he is feeling and my mind is at ease knowing he has such a caring educator looking out for him!!! Her constant communication made it possible for our son to not only survive 7th grade but thrive as well:-)

Ms. Victoria Tran



According to my son, Ms. Tran is the most kindhearted person! I couldn't agree more. She has been an incredible source of support for him this year. I am not sure we could have survived 7th grade without her! She goes above and beyond to make sure that he can find success in school. Almost daily, I hear about some way she helped to make my son's day better :-)

Ms. Lisa Warren



Ms. Warren has been a great source of support for my son during his math and science classes. He says that she is a great help to all the students and that she wants them all to be successful! Ms. Warren is very approachable and he is comfortable seeking her out for help. For students who struggle academically, this is a key necessity!

Mr. Michael Thurm



We transferred to the Day M.S. BECAUSE of Mike Thurm. I am so impressed how he connects with my child and how he understands the importance of establishing a positive relationship with him. I am so grateful to him that he has taken an interest in my child and his social, emotional well-being. Mike will be the adult in my child's life that will make all the difference and save him. He has a passion and the energy for what he does so naturally and effectively day in and day out. Mike is very kind and supportive to me as a parent. I feel respected and liked and so does my child. Thank you Mike!!!!

Ms. Erica Joyce



Ms. Joyce has always tried to discuss with my kid at first and find the best way for the best solution. When my kid faced school refusal, she was flexible and also gave us dedicated support, and my kid could return to the school with the re-entry plan. She is persevering and good at finding the positive signs.

Mr. David Demarest



Exceptional care in not only guiding, mentoring and assisting my child as his aide but always going beyond what is required by also showing up at his extra curricular activities, giving him great pep talks about what ails my child and giving great daily feedback about keeping him on track with his homework! In all the years of having an aide, this individual truly stands out! We were so lucky to have him!

Ms. Erica Joyce



The care demonstrated by this individual was not only exceptional but that every issue addressed was always perceived as high priority and handled expediently! We also felt that this individual had not only great empathy for our child's issues, but would personalize each issue and give us invaluable insight of what our child maybe experiencing! We are truly blessed with having such an inclusion facilitator being a champion for our child!

Ms. Jacqueline Mann



Ms. Mann is a wonderful addition to the F.A. Day Middle School community. One of the first things she did over the summer was to reach out to the SEPAC board to make a connection and to offer her assistance with anything we would need for the school year. She has followed through in helping us to get our emails out to the F. A. Day community, and we look forward to having more contact and communication with her over the coming years.

Ms. Roseanna Baack



Ms. Baack was very helpful and understanding given that we had to give my son a 3 month break of his ADD medicine. She came up with alternatives to dealing with my son when he was feeling restless, while keeping control of the situation and he was very appreciative of this (one of the reasons she quickly became my son's favorite teacher as well). She was always available and quick to inform us and respond when there were concerns and issues that came up. In addition she always responded to the forms that our doctor asked my son's teachers to fill out. A great educator and individual.

Ms. Britni-Lynn Brierly



Ms. Brierly is my math teacher. When I first became her student I could tell she really wanted me to do well and that she really cared if we learned. She makes complicated math problems much easier to understand and explains everything well. She is always happy and ready to answer questions throughout class. During class she is rarely at her desk because she is always with the students at their desk helping them or teaching at the board. I think all these reasons are why she should be nominated.

Mr. Michael Moran



Our son is a 6th grader and has struggled with transition to the middle school. As a kid suffering from ADHD, every new bit of change seem insurmountable challenge for him, especially those tasks that require him to concentrate for extensive time. As our son's IEP teacher, Mr. Moran is extremely patient and understanding. He is always there when needed, guiding him through various tasks. Mr. Moran also communicates with us regularly, keeping us posted about every progress and setback. This helps us a lot in terms of making adjustment. Mr. Moran is truly outstanding and deserves this award.

Ms. Lauren Buckman



Ms. Buckman is my Learning Center Special Ed Teacher. She has a lot of patience and helps me with my homework. She appreciates the quality of my work because she knows it is difficult for me to concentrate on getting my work done. She always helps me if I have any questions. Because of these reasons, I would like to nominate her.

Mr. Davis Demarest



The care demonstrated by this individual was beyond normal expectations! From educator, cheerleader, homework liaison, extracurricular champion, constant supporter to BF, my child thrived due to this unwavering dedication!

Mr. Gordon Green



Excellent Math teacher who taught diligently throughout the year. My daughter has learned a lot from him over the year. She has come a long way based on Mr. Green's feedback, support and teaching skills.

Dr. Meghan Hudson



Knowledgeable about the intricacies of SPED, Dr. Hudson is an exceptional evaluator, whose findings lead to creative & effective recommendations. An active listener, her reflective, collaborative nature results in highly useful decisions at Team Mtgs. Her willingness to proactively communicate with all involved with a student is so helpful. Most importantly, Dr. H.'s ability to connect w/& support those students whom she counsels is unparalleled. My child's improved happiness at school has been as a result of her relationship with Dr. H. She is an extraordinary person & truly gifted as a school psychologist.

Mr. Michael Thurm



Having the privilege of Mr. Thurm manage the SPED dept. at Day has been an integral aspect of my child's progress, having fabulous teachers & providers over the past 3 years. His commitment to & compassion for the students as is evident. Mr. T. is always available to parents, sincerely listening to & considering their input, answering questions, providing resources & works with Teams (including parents & students) in a collaborative, reflective manner, open to adjustments to a student's program if necessary. His knowledge in concert w/ kindness as a person results in an exceptional leader, for whom I am very grateful.

Ms. Kelly Conrad



Ms. Conrad has been my go-to source for guidance and assistance with my child this year. She has always gone above and beyond to hear my concerns (without judgement) and help come up with positive solutions. I had some concerns with my child's IEP plan earlier this year and she wasted no time setting up a meeting for me with the assistant principal and supported my decision to make some changes that wound up having an outstanding results for my child's confidence and self-esteem. There are many more instances of her helping my child and I am incredibly grateful for her!

Ms. Lauren Chambers



Ms. Chambers always has a way of making everyone in the room feel important. We love her kindness and approach to teaching. Our daughter relies on her for new strategies in and out of the classroom. You have a way of making her feel confident when she is nervous so she can make the next step. Thank you so much for all you do to make her successful every day.

Ms. Lori Ashton



Ms. Ashton has been very helpful with her diligence, hard work, and great experience. We are grateful for her guidance, and we know that our child will greatly miss her when he goes to high school.

Middle School



OAK HILL

Ms. Jennifer Ames



Our son suffers from anxiety, which is often triggered in the middle school environment. Over the past year, Ms. Ames has made him feel very welcome in her office and has really earned his trust. He feels like he can turn to her whenever he is having a challenging day. He is now using more positive strategies to respond to stressful situations because he knows he has a grown-up who will support him. We appreciate Ms. Ames and the larger team working with our son and his teachers to come up with accommodations that will allow him to stay in school.

Ms. Nina Bennes



Nina Bennes has been a kind, caring, supportive, predictable, and stable person in my son's middle school experience. With the support of Ms. Bennes, my son has felt safe, happy, and confident. We are so grateful for the skills and tools she has taught him, which in turn have helped build his confidence. We will surely miss Ms. Bennes as he moves on to High School.

Ms. Mary Frances Horan



Coming in to 8th Grade our daughter was still working on confidence and organization. With Ms. Horan's strong incredible support and believing in our daughters ability we have seen huge growth! Ms. Horan was not only a mentor to our daughter but inspired her by being an amazing role model. Her patience and kindness will never be forgotten!

Ms. Caitlin Irwin



Ms. Irwin helps my son a lot in many ways that make my son's school life much easier and smoother. She has kept me posted about my son's progress in school, which enables me to help my son in the right ways. My son and I truly appreciate the teacher's help and appreciate this SEPAC program.

Ms. Bridget McAulty



Ms. McAulty helps my son a lot in many ways that make my son's school life much easier and smoother. She has kept me posted with my son's progress in school, which enables me to help my son in the right ways. My son and I truly appreciate the teacher's help and appreciate this SEPPAC program.

Ms. Mary Frances Horan



Mary Frances has been a critical piece to the success of our 8th grader's success and eventual transition into High School. Starting with discussions even before the school started, Mary Frances advocated for additional services that would lend themselves to our son's success. Her positive "can-do" attitude has turned our Middle School experience around. As our son starts a new chapter in his life, we wanted a chance to say "thank you" to Mary Frances for all of her efforts in making this our son's best year yet!

Middle School



BROWN

Mr. Kevin Travers



Mr. Travers has been my child's school counselor through some very difficult times, and he has always handled them with patience, understanding, and kindness. I am so impressed by his responsiveness and his sincere concern for my child's well being. Beyond that, I am so grateful for his appreciation of my child's unique personality which has made him feel supported and valued as an individual. Thank you Kevin!

Ms. Jana daSilva



Ms. daSilva has gone well beyond the required duties of her position to support parents of children with special needs at Brown through innovative programming. She created monthly seminars for current parents to meet with various special education staff on relevant topics and held a special meeting just for parents of incoming students. She has enthusiastically collaborated with the SEPAC liaison to help disseminate information to and connect parents with each other. I am so impressed by her commitment to supporting families with special needs at Brown and we are lucky to have her - thank you Jana!

Ms. Danielle Gassert



Ms. Gassert comes from a strength approach not a deficit approach when working with our child. The easy thing to do is believe that a child cannot achieve and treat them that way. Ms. Gassert has always believed our child could achieve, which in turn meant instead of taking the easy way out and not pushing our child, she took the very long hard road to keep making sure our child reached her full potential. (Ms. Gassert did not treat my child as a poor black child. She treated her as a strong young woman who has the skills to do the work.)

As a teacher all my life, I am in awe!

Mr. Matthew Lasko



To help manage the new homework demands of middle school, Matthew instituted a framework that enabled our child to organize and prioritize her assignments and corresponding paperwork. Now she arrives home with a clear understanding of her homework and deadlines. Matthew will suggest interesting solutions to challenges. He recommended that attendance at an after-school club could be a motivator for timely completion of assignments, an approach that proved highly successful. Matthew has made a big difference in our child's life this year and we enthusiastically nominate him for this award.

Mr. Isaiah Davidson Weiss



Though Brown Middle School starts at 8:30 am, Mr. Davidson Weiss went the extra mile by arriving one hour early and working with my child at South High during A-block.

Ms. Renae Fulkerson Keszycki



Ms. Fulkerson Keszycki has been so good at staying on top of my child's schedule and always made every arrangement proactively. My child had a very successful year at school, and we are not taking any of her work lightly. Thank you so much, Renae!

Ms. Natanya Savitt



Ms. Tanya - thank you so much for all that you have done for our family this year. Thank you for caring, trying, teaching, smiling, listening, advising, advocating, helping, supporting, facilitating, prompting, and above all - for seeing our son for his many talents and abilities, all while having fun throughout the process!

We consider ourselves lucky to have you on our team, and we are grateful to have you with us on this journey.

Middle School



BIGELOW

Ms. Crista Cavicchio



My son has struggled this year staying on task with his academic work load. Crista has contacted me weekly and sometimes daily to inform me about what he needs to complete. She also contacts me to tell me when he is doing well, which is so refreshing. Without Crista's constant support, my son would not be successful. She is a tireless educator who has taught my son some very valuable lessons on perseverance.

Ms. Stephanie Dalfior



Stefanie is a teacher that goes above and beyond! Her availability to her students/families is remarkable - answering emails at night after school and on the weekends about homework or whatever we needed to discuss. She has made a big impact on our family and we are so appreciative and grateful for her commitment, kindness, and remarkable dedication.

High School



NEWTON
SOUTH

Mr. John Curley



Your support of my child is greatly appreciated. Your willingness to walk with my child from Newton South to Newton Center T stop (rain or shine) to visit colleges is an example of your dedication. There have been many off-hour emails, after office hours and on the weekends. Hope all the future kids in your path will benefit from the college support you and your aide provide.

Mr. Aaron Lewis



"Mr. Lewis is a very positive, friendly person who is really easy to talk to - and he always has candy! I've known him since I moved here 3 years ago and since the beginning, he always let me hang out in his office with the other kids when I have free time. I would say that he was the person who helped me a lot in high school. He's a really good guy and I will miss him a lot, but I'm sorry to tell him that the Yankees will still suck."

Mr. Alex Strongin



Tremendous dedication and patience for rolling out a brand new, incredible varsity sport at NSHS; Unified track and Field. Coach Strongin made me extremely proud to be a NSHS parent at every meet.

Mr. Kevin Flynn



Tremendous dedication and patience for rolling out a brand new, incredible varsity sport at NSHS; Unified track and Field. Coach Flynn made me extremely proud to be a NSHS parent at every meet.

Ms. Kelly Henderson



Ms. Henderson has been my English teacher for 2 wonderful years and will most likely be my teacher again next year when I am a senior. She always has helped me get through my class work whenever I needed it. Even if we needed to write papers or get done some kind of work that I didn't quite get right away, she did her absolute best to walk me through it. I have went to see her during J Block a few times this school year when I had an essay or writing assignment on the computer or something like that.

Ms. Judy Dolan



Ms. Dolan is an amazing teacher who does her job pretty well. Even though Math isn't my favorite class in school, she always has ways and attempts to make it enjoyable for me as well as the other students in the class. Sometimes I go and see her during J Block when I'm struggling with some of the work, or even during class whenever I ask for help, she comes over to my desk and assists me through whatever problem I'm trying.

Ms. Tracy Corrigan



Ms. Corrigan is a nice and awesome teacher I have this year. She is in my Math class and she helps me do some of my work. There were some times this year I had some rough days during class and sometimes I would talk with her about it and she helps me get back on track so I can have a good class. She is always very nice to me and is willing to help me out in class whenever I need it

Mr. Marc Banks



Mr. Banks is a very cool and amazing teacher at Newton South. He is my Dean I have got to know since some time in my Freshman year. Whenever I had problems or concerns in school or even out of school, I have went over to his office to see him and talk to him and he has really helped me with my challenges. He always has seen me as a great student and enjoys seeing me around at the school.

Ms. Kathleen Solage



Ms. Solage is a great teacher I go and see every week at school. Every week I talk with her and check in and I always share with her about stuff that goes on with me, either in school or in my life and she always is very open to listening about everything I tell her. Of course there has been times this year in school where I have felt anxious, annoyed and a bit down. Whenever I feel those ways, Ms. Solage is the teacher I usually go and talk to.

Mr. Jeff Knoedler



Mr. K is one of my favorite teachers at Newton South. He is the best South Stage director I have got to know since the start of my high school career. Since then, he has helped me grow as an actor and teaching me basic techniques to professional acting. I have got to do amazing South Stage productions where I always feel accepted by him and never turned away and I will definitely continue to do so next year for my final year at school.

Mr. Alex Strongin



Mr. Strongin has made a huge difference in my son's life during his freshman year at Newton South HS. My son is a sports fanatic, and loves being involved in sports in any way that he can. With Mr. Strongin as his Aide, my son was the Manager of the Freshman Football Team, and the Freshman Basketball Team. During the spring, my son was on the Unified Track Team, where Mr. Strongin was one of 3 phenomenal coaches. Thanks to Mr. Strongin, my son feels like he truly belongs at Newton South, and that he is an important member of the Newton South community.

Dr. Meaghan Martin



I'd like to nominate Dr. Meaghan Martin.

Dr. Martin is more than just an English teacher or advisor. She's my mentor. She taught me grammar, of course, but more than that, she has taught me about being a young woman and a good person. She supports me academically and emotionally. Basically, she's awesome and deserves all the recognition in the world.

Mr. Kevin Flynn



A huge THANK YOU to Mr. Flynn for agreeing to co-coach the Unified Track Team at Newton South HS! In a very short time, Mr. Flynn has helped create a truly inclusive TEAM; one which my son is proud to be a part of. As a result of Mr. Flynn's positive attitude and unwavering support, my son has had an amazing experience on this team. I am so grateful to Mr. Flynn for giving my son the opportunity to be an athlete, a competitor and a leader on his team.

Mr. Ryan Spruck



Spruck's office has become a space where I can go as a safe haven. I remember one day I was really struggling. It had been a long day, and I was sitting on his couch, crying. He walked in, and the conversation went as follows.

Spruck: Are you safe?

Me: Yeah.

Spruck: Do you need anything?

Me: No.

Spruck: Bitchin'.

He let me stay there and cry for a while before going on with what I needed to do. That was exactly what I'd needed. Not coddling, not "talk to me." I just needed a place to break down for a little while, and he totally got it. And he totally gets it ... every time.

Mr. Brian Deleskey



Mr. Deleskey was one of the co-coaches of the Unified Track Team at Newton South HS, and my son was so thrilled to be a part of his team. Mr. Deleskey helped bring out the athlete, competitor and leader in my son. Mr. Deleskey's positive attitude and deep respect for the students on his team enables them all to be the best that they can be. Thanks to Mr. Deleskey, my son feels like an important member of the Newton South HS community.

Ms. Christine DePari



Ms. DePari has been an integral part of my son's team this year. She has helped my son grow in so many ways, and for the first time, my son is truly advocating for himself. Ms. DePari knows precisely when my son needs support, and when to give him space. Ms. DePari has helped my son believe in his math abilities, which has been so difficult for my son for so many years. She treats my son with the utmost respect. I know that my son is in good hands for the next 3 years at Newton South with Ms. DePari on his team, and I look forward to seeing all that she can help him accomplish.

Ms. Katie Augusta



Katie Augusta is a god-send! Her experience and knowledge are invaluable, not to mention her kind and supportive manner. Katie has gone above and beyond her job description for our family, starting with the transition in 8th grade. Not only has Katie provided exceptional instruction to my son every day at school, she has helped keep this mama very calm during the course of the year. I am so grateful that my son has Ms. Augusta on his team, as he has grown so much under her guidance.

THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING!

Ms. Joanne Curtis



Joanne, thank you so much for getting our son safely to and from school! You greet my son each (early!) AM with a smile and are still smiling at the end of the long day! We are grateful for your kindness and patience!

Ms. Julie Kaplan



Julie is a godsend for our family. She has truly connected with our daughter and is clearly invested in her safety and her success.

She goes above and beyond the call every day to find new ways to engage her and keep her interested and motivated in school. Our girl literally runs out of the car in the morning when she sees Julie waiting.

And somehow, in the middle of all that she does with the kids, she also manages to put this mama at ease when concerns are running high. We are so grateful for her presence at South, and in our family's life.

Ms. Katie Augusta



We are so grateful to Katie for her efforts on behalf of our daughter this year. Her commitment to creating a supportive, engaging, safe, and inclusive environment has made our transition to the high school a joy. We could not - and wouldn't want to - imagine life at South without her.

Ms. Gail Kramer



When your child has a life threatening condition, you spend a lot of time feeling like you're drowning. Gail's presence at school is like a floating dock in the middle of an ocean ... providing safety, security, and breathable air.

She is calm, competent, and compassionate no matter what is thrown at her and we are so, so grateful to have her at South.

Mr. Alex Strongin



My son has had a great first year at NSHS and Mr. Strongin has been a big reason why. From providing support in Math class, to working with my son helping him manage the Boys Freshmen Basketball team, he has been wonderful. To cap it off, this spring as NSHS put together in a matter of weeks (vs. the normal months) a Unified Track and Field team, Mr. Strongin didn't hesitate when asked and stepped up to coach the Unified team.

We cannot thank him enough for providing such an inclusive platform--one that allowed our son a place to thrive and contribute and become a part of NSHS.

Mr. Kevin Flynn



Mr. Flynn stepped up without hesitation when asked to coach the newly (and quickly) formed Unified Track and Field team this spring at NSHS. Our son has thoroughly enjoyed his energy, spirit and humor. With a coaching background in hockey and golf, Mr. Flynn took the time to work with NSHS Track coaches to learn more about their sport to better teach the Unified team. And what a team it was-this 1st year team went undefeated in league meets, tied for 2nd at the Sectional meet and qualified for States! Our son has absolutely loved his track team experience in no small part thanks to Mr. Flynn!

Mr. Deleskey



From the moment Mr. Deleskey heard about the newly formed Unified Track and Field team at NSHS this spring, you could not keep him away. He has served as a volunteer coach all this spring with the team and we cannot thank him enough for his time! It is obvious observing him, that he has just loved working with the team and them with him! It is this contagious passion that has been such an integral part of the team's success. Our son has thoroughly loved working with Mr. D--who has him doing the "gronk spike" after the relay and high five's all around making sports what it should be--FUN!

Mr. Jonathon Greiner



Mr. Greiner has a wonderful style of teaching! His enthusiasm is infectious and has reminded me why I love history. He makes history sound like a great story, which ultimately it is, and I have enjoyed our classroom and schoology discussions immensely! I will miss your class and hope to have you again in grade 11!

Ms. Deborah Bernhard



Thank you for being a great English teacher! You and Mr. Greiner make a great team! You both are great communicators too...with the students and parents!

Mr. Steven Rattendi



Thank you for being a great communicator with
the students and parents!

Mrs. Katie Augusta



Transitioning to new schools can be tough enough, but to high school, it doesn't get much harder for any student. We want to thank our son's Inclusion Facilitator Mrs. Augusta, for all her efforts in making his transition as smooth as possible. Through all the highs and lows of the school year, Mrs. Augusta has always remained steady, calm, responsive and flexible to his needs. She has been pro-active on his behalf and worked tirelessly in making him feel a true part of the NSHS community which he loves!

High School



NEWTON
NORTH

Ms. Tracy Ryan



Ms. Ryan has supported my son through a very difficult year. He suffered a concussion and could not play a sport, missed school and struggled to be in class. She kept him on track emotionally and academically. When he has made mistakes as only a teenager can, she has shown him love and support while holding him accountable for his actions. Ms. Ryan is truly a remarkable person and educator.

Ms. Laura Levin



We nominate Ms. Levin because she is a great math teacher; she is a great Facilitator by talking problems out and having patience with my Mom. Ms. Levin is a great person to talk to when I mix up my words and Ms. Levin is there for me .

Ms. Levin wears more hats than the peddler in the book, "Caps for Sale". And, she wears them while roller skating around Newton North helping students and their families!

Thank you, Ms. Levin!

Ms. Dana Shulsinger



Ms. Shulsinger helps kids that struggle and who need attention. She helps me when I'm stressed out. She and Ms. Levin are sidekicks so I have a magical team to solve problems. She looks me in the eye and pushes her glasses up a little and talks with her hands and says, "I think you need to breathe" and that helps me! Thank you, Ms. Shulsinger.

Ms. Heather Irber



There is a special place in my heart for my Culinary teachers. They make me feel happy and included in the activities. Ms. Irber makes me laugh when she smiles and she lights up my face. Ms. McKinney is my celebrity and she just-
WOW! Ms. Marzilli is inspiring with good teaching advice. They help me find my passion and what path to take, and help me achieve my goals!

Ms. Lisa Marzilli



There is a special place in my heart for my Culinary teachers. They make me feel happy and included in the activities. Ms. Irber makes me laugh when she smiles and she lights up my face. Ms. McKinney is my celebrity and she just-**WOW!** Ms. Marzilli is inspiring with good teaching advice. They help me find my passion and what path to take, and help me achieve my goals!

Ms. Lisa McKinney



There is a special place in my heart for my Culinary teachers. They make me feel happy and included in the activities. Ms. Irber makes me laugh when she smiles and she lights up my face. Ms. McKinney is my celebrity and she just-
WOW! Ms. Marzilli is inspiring with good teaching advice. They help me find my passion and what path to take, and help me achieve my goals!

Mrs. Tricia Lochiatto



For the past two plus years, Mrs. Lochiatto has worked extra hard to make sure my son worked towards all of his goals and was as happy as possible at school. The thing I most appreciate is how communicative Mrs. Lochiatto has been with me. I am truly grateful for all of the emails and meetings we shared in order to create and enforce the best plan possible for my son. Thank you!

Ms. Maya Shulsinger



In her role as an aide for the STEP program at North, Ms. Shulsinger has been so helpful to my son. She took him on trips into the community and has provided incredible guidance for him in a culinary arts class in which he needed support. Her dedication and warmth have been truly appreciated.

Ms. Leah Castellano



Ms. Castellano is the administrative assistant to the Dean of Riley House at Newton North. One of her jobs is keeping track of all the attendance-related phone calls from parents excusing their children from being absent or from being late. When my son had a hard time independently getting to school, Ms. Castellano went above and beyond her call of duty by listening to me waver about whether or not I wanted to excuse my son...multiple times! She is also always so kind to my son, which I am incredibly grateful for.

Mr. Paul Connolly



Originally I met Mr. Connolly when I was doing stats for the basketball team, and he was the coach. After I stopped doing the stats, he still said, “hi” to me in the hallways. This year in my culinary arts class, Mr. Connolly was an aide with two other students. Whenever the teacher wasn’t able to help me, or my aide wasn’t there, Mr. Connolly would step in and provide a helping hand when he saw I needed it. Every time he would help me, I would remark to my aide that I didn’t know he was a cook on the side!

Ms. Janice Miller



Ms. Miller read and fully implemented my son's IEP. She did not see a child with Executive Functioning issues who was hampered by his learning challenge but his potential. She worked with him throughout the year and guided him step-by-step on how to construct a well written essay, a skill that will serve him throughout his life. More importantly he went from a B- to being on the honors watchlist thanks to her really teaching him. She taught him to believe in himself and be proud of his accomplishments, not compare himself to others. She changed his life.

Ms. Carolyn Fertig



Ms Fertig is an exceptional educator who takes the time to get to know and understand her students' individual needs, as well as their families. She is incredibly thoughtful, caring and responsive. Ms. Fertig takes extra time above and beyond the classroom to check in frequently with her students and their parents. She is creative in her approaches and gifted at balancing the abilities to be nurturing and straight forward with her students. She set high expectations without being aggressive or patronizing. We feel lucky that our child benefited from having four years with Ms Fertig!

Ms. Deborah Knisell



Debbie is an amazing teacher who offers love and support to her students.

Ms. Lisa Goldthwaite



As a special ed. consultant, I have had the privilege of collaborating with Ms. Goldthwaite for the past 2 years. I continue to be extremely impressed by her leadership as she manages an outstanding substantially separate program at NNHS. The program is the best I've seen of its type. Students are taught effectively by talented & dedicated teachers & staff members, both in the classroom & community, emphasizing independence, academic, social, & vocational skills under Ms. G.'s tutelage. Her professionalism, compassion, & knowledge make her stand out as one of the most extraordinary special ed. leaders in the field.

Ms. Smitha Sahadevan



Smitha Sevadevan is an outstanding Math teacher! She is able to engage, motivate and inspire the students every day. Best Math teacher ever!

Ms. Tracey Ryan



Ms. Ryan is a good teacher. I would appreciate it tremendously if you gave her award to celebrate her excellence and mastery of this craft. She has worked hard for the betterment of me and countless other student's education, to ensure success later in life. I switched academic support teachers in the middle of the year to Ms. Ryan and she truly changed my year both academically and emotionally. She is an excellent teacher and an excellent person. Truly a "world class teacher" and I think she deserves this award.

Ms. Jennifer Letourneau



Jennifer Letourneau is an outstanding math teacher! She was able to inspire and motivate our son to have fun with math again! Thank you so much for being such a passionate teacher!!!

Mr. Timothy Finnegan



Timothy Finnegan is an outstanding
English teacher!

Passionate, inspiring and motivating!
Finally an English teacher who was
able to encourage our son to get out of
his shell. Thank you!!!

Ms. Katherine B. Schenck



Katherine B. Schenck is a truly exceptional special education teacher. She not only brought a deep love of her subject matter in English and History, but also brought an even deeper understanding about how to make that material accessible and inspiring to her students. With her sensitivity, ability to meet students where they are, and wisdom about the ways that toxic stress can interfere with learning, she created a classroom that felt safe, mutually respectful, and highly motivating. Our family will forever be grateful to this amazing educator.

Ms. Amy McMahan



Ms. McMahan is special because she teaches us new words! And, what the words are about. This helps me be smarter and smarter! For instance: “peculiar,” “heredity,” “similarity,” “misconception.” And also, Ms. McMahan is funny, kind and helps us learn what’s happening in books!

Ms. Katherine B. Schenck



Kitty has gone out of her way to help Julian develop academically, and helping him navigate the past year. Thank you!

Ms. Betsy Waksman



Ms. Waksman is a special person because she is kind and gentle. I have trouble thinking what I should say and how to say it and sometimes to figure out communication. Ms. Waksman helps me understand and to make me be understanding. And, I like her curly hair!

Ms. Meg Martineau



Meg sees possibilities and has leveraged her skills and positive attitude to help make the possible real for our son. At every step of the way, she has listened to our concerns with great interest and care; taken into account our son's strengths, needs, and interests; and adjusted her plans to ensure continued success.

Mr. Matthew Espelín



Matt makes speech therapy both enjoyable and productive for our son. Matt has found the perfect balance between pushing our son to achieve his goals and providing encouragement and support. Also, he has helped him build his vocabulary and leverage his strong social skills.

Ms. Beth O'Brien



Beth has been a rock, our foundation in our son's final year at North. She 'gets' him and is unfailingly kind, empathetic, efficient and goes out of her way to keep all members of the Team on the same page. Her ever-positive outlook has been a tremendous support and keeps us going.

We'll miss Beth and thank her for her extra efforts and willingness to always be engaged.

Ms. Deb Lund



Deb has gone above and beyond in engaging and encouraging our son in her Physics class. He even toyed with the idea of being a Physics major in college. Besides her infinite energy (kinetic as well as potential :-)), she has looked for ways to encourage engagement by all, and by the end of the year the students were even asking her for advice on ensuring our son's involvement in group work. We're grateful for her positive energy, encouragement, availability for extra help, and faith in drawing out our son's abilities.

Mr. Scott MacMannis



Thank you so much for all you do to help our son be successful each and every day. You have helped him, nudged, guided and pushed him to be a successful student. He is proud of his work and grateful that you are an ally and resource. We appreciate the work you put in to make sure that the home to school connection is always working smoothly.