

I Touched the Future

I would like to nominate Mrs. Linda Baskwell to receive the "I Touched the Future" Award for 2018. I have known Linda for 43 years. We were in the Wilson Area High School marching band together, taught at Shafer Elementary School, and worked together at the Nazareth Area Middle School. Linda had always been a person who put others before herself. She was a special education teacher and curriculum leader, and I witnessed her consistent commitment to many of the special needs students and their parents.

Linda was always giving her students positive comments, using her creativity to make them special learning tools and study guides, and was always willing to give extra time, even after the school day ended. If a parent needed to come in at 4:00 or 4:30, Linda never complained or seemed bothered by the extra time. She just chalked it up to the job; keeping parents engaged in their child's learning and educational needs.

When teachers were given their class rosters in the beginning of the year, Linda was always there at our early meetings to make sure we had copies of students' IEPs and communicated with us specific needs to help the children in our classrooms succeed. Her leadership and commitment to her students was exceptional. She knew what worked for her students and assisted teachers with her endless support.

At curriculum leader meetings, Linda always made sure that any plan for a new school initiative was an attainable goal for the children with IEPs or 504s. She was a powerful advocate for them and wanted to make sure that any adaptations were in place to help them succeed.

Not only did Linda advocate for her students and remained a positive role model for them, but she always gave the teachers, office staff and custodians a friendship that was priceless. Our team still talks about how we need one of Linda's pineapple upside down cakes or her chocolate covered peanut butter crackers for a morale booster. She would surprise us with her delicious delicacies at just the right time.

Linda is still so dedicated and committed to the students at Nazareth. She comes in as a substitute teacher for special education staff members who are out. She shows her kindness and support to the staff and students each day she walks through the doors at the middle school.

Everyone thinks very highly of Linda and looks up to her as a true professional. Her friendly smile and laughter follows her around the school.

This extraordinary teacher has touched many lives throughout her years here in Nazareth. I am proud to have taught with her and thank her personally for all she has done for students to make their lives better and for making the special education instruction in the Nazareth Area School District an exceptional one.

Celia m. Pascoe