



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Edwin M. Schaffler, President

972.661.9792

LOCAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED FOR DEDICATION, COMMITMENT
The Catholic Foundation Honors Seven Catholic School Employees
with Work of Heart Awards and \$500 grants

DALLAS –The Catholic Foundation has recognized seven Catholic school teachers and staff who display strong commitment and dedication to their students, schools and communities. The honorees were nominated for going above and beyond their call of duty, and each recipient received a Work of Heart Award and \$500 grant for personal use.

“The Work of Heart honorees are an inspiration according to the heartfelt nominations we receive from individuals advocating for Catholic school teachers and staff that have impacted their lives in amazing ways,” said Edwin M. Schaffler, CEO and president of The Catholic Foundation. “Having the resources to honor and recognize these worthy individuals is a great blessing for the Foundation, and acknowledging their efforts is an incredible privilege.” The seven recipients of the Work of Heart Awards were selected from nominations written by students, teachers, parents, administrators and community members. The criteria is based on traditional merit including tenure and leadership, acts of kindness or charity, Christian example, mentoring and simply going the extra mile for an individual student, family or the community.

The Work of Heart Award program was established in 2005 by an anonymous Dallas family through The Catholic Foundation. The Catholic Foundation continues the program, providing funding for the grants from its Work of Heart Fund. In addition, individual contributions can be made to the Work of Heart Award Fund at The Catholic Foundation.

The following recipients each received a Work of Heart Award and \$500 in recognition of their outstanding service. Each is listed with a comment from the nomination letter submitted on his or her behalf:

Bishop Dunne Catholic School

Kelly Bush, Fine Arts and Theology Teacher

“By herself, Kelly is working [on Bishop Dunne’s school play] with a cast and crew of nearly 40 students. She spends hours working rehearsals and other preparations for this play. In addition to the play responsibility, this year, she created and implemented a new course called ‘Freshman Foundations.’ Kelly spent all summer researching and designing this course. Her goal for the class was not only to teach life and study skills to our freshman class, but also to make all the freshman feel that their voices are heard and recognized. In its first semester, the course has become the most popular class among our freshman. A statement regarding educators in Catholic schools states that they teach for the love of God’s children. Kelly Bush is this phrase personified.”

St. Augustine Catholic School

Taryn Lewis, 6th-8th Grade Social Studies and Religion Teacher

“As a first year teacher, Taryn was given responsibilities that would make an experienced teacher

cringe and yet she rose to every challenge that was presented to her. Now in her third year, Taryn serves as the lead teacher of the middle school. Every year, Taryn has a few students who she takes under her wing. Often these are students who everyone else has given up on, but because of her work with them, they are able to see their own potential and self-worth leading to their success. Her determination and tenacity truly inspire me.”

St. Joseph Catholic School (Richardson)

Teresa Czaus, 2nd Grade Teacher

“Mrs. Czaus truly instructs our children beautifully in the Faith! She teaches them that their faith is the center of who they are and gives them Godly ways to handle things in life. She is also patient, kind and caring. I received an email from her one afternoon, letting me know that my normally outgoing son went off by himself during recess. She went over to him to find what was wrong, and then had the other children come over to cheer him up, but he just wanted to be alone. She just wanted me to know so that I could be more sensitive to him when he got home from school, just in case there was something truly wrong. Mrs. Czaus did not have to email me. Most teachers probably wouldn’t have, but she took the time because she truly cares about her students. She also modeled beautifully to the other students how to try to cheer a friend up in times of trouble. This may seem small, but to a second grader it is big.”

St. Mary of Carmel Catholic School

Madeline Elliott, 8th Grade Teacher

“Madeline is a gift. She is such a great teacher and goes above and way beyond her role as an educator. She loves those kids and does so much for them. She reads essay after essay over Christmas break for her students’ high school applications. She takes them to do service projects. She teaches them life skills. They are the most polite bunch of eighth graders I know and Madeline deserves some credit for that. She has much passion and much dedication. She expects much out of her students and they rise to the occasion. Her students love her and it’s easy to see why. She’s fantastic!”

Blanca Guerra, Administrator

“Blanca is a gem and shining star. She goes way above her job description. She helped immensely in recruiting students this summer to fill open spots before school started. Many great families came to this school because of her. She continually helps with many projects at the school and all would agree that she is one hard worker, taking on any task! She is self-motivated to make a difference. St. Mary of Carmel is blessed to have her and I can see her making a big impact in that community for years to come.”

St. Pius X Catholic School

Cindy Elwood, Principal

“My son decided to invite her to the band concert. She asked about all the details. Another teacher overheard and told her she really did not have to go because the same band program would be done the following Wednesday. Saturday morning as we went to the band concert, my son asked if I thought Mrs. Elwood would come. She was there and sat through the two hours of music. She found me after and told me she came because he asked. She is truly a gift given to us from God to lead us by example. Through all of her efforts to reach the children and families, I think she should be commended.”

St. Rita Catholic School

Kerry Franklin, Kindergarten Teacher

“I am continually awed by what the kids in Mrs. Franklin’s class learn – not only how to read and write, but the life skills that are so important in today’s world. How to make good decisions, how to think for themselves and do what is right, the importance of treating one another with respect, how to develop a plan B if plan A falls through and the list goes on. Mrs. Franklin spends countless hours of her own time coming up with new and different ways to engage and inspire the kids, from a winter picnic to break up

the winter doldrums to the 'laptops of learning,' the kids do each quarter. She takes countless photos and videos of the classroom activities and uploads them to a Shutterfly account each parent has opened. She does this over the weekend and I know my daughter really loves sharing what she has done with me and the rest of the family. I'm sure that years from now my daughter will be telling her kids about the amazing kindergarten teacher she had when she went to St. Rita."

To nominate a candidate for the Work of Heart Award, please visit the Foundation's Web site at www.catholicfoundation.com for instructions on the nomination process. Anyone serving as a full- or part-time employee in a Catholic school located in the Diocese of Dallas may be nominated.

Chartered in 1955, The Catholic Foundation was founded by a group of dedicated Catholic laymen with a vision that extended far beyond the charitable needs of the moment. For 55 years, this independent, nonprofit corporation has dedicated its resources to compassionate charitable giving through grants provided by benefactors through its many planned giving programs. The Foundation has been able to provide approximately \$25.3 million through hundreds of grants to various religious, educational and charitable organizations within the Diocese of Dallas during its 50 plus years of existence. In addition, donor-advised funds maintained at the Foundation have accounted for many more grants amounting to millions of dollars over the years. **For additional information about The Catholic Foundation, call 972.661.9792.**

###