

## **Stand Up For Justice: Bringing Respect to Other's Differences.**

Across the Central Bucks School District, a district of 18,000 students of varied backgrounds, there are continued reports of students facing racism, antisemitism, transphobia, ableism, and other kinds of bigotry and bullying while at school. In an effort to bring respect for others' differences and as a way to acknowledge those who strive to do so, The Stand Up For Justice (SUFJ) Educator Grant was introduced to the CBSD Community.

Beth Povlow, a retired teacher, started the SUFJ Educator Grant 13 years ago in Collier County, Florida in response to a group of students who initiated "Kick a Jew Day" throughout their school district of over 47,000 students. She partnered with the Greater Naples Jewish Federation (GNJF) to create the grant in effort to counter bigotry in schools and highlight the work of educators who actively work to promote justice. Since then, the program has been going strong and making a critical difference in the schools. The GNJF says this program is the most important thing they do.

The SUFJ Educator Grant recognizes High School, Middle School, and Elementary School educators who are innovative in bringing respect for others' differences into their activities with students in a transformative, impactful, and caring way. The goal is to create a resource for educators of any discipline to incorporate strategies that promote understanding and respect among students, countering bigotry and bullying.

In November, Shana Trichon (daughter of Beth Povlow) and Heather Reynolds introduced the SUFJ Educator Grant as a pilot program to the CBSD community. The program has been very well received. Educators across the district are thrilled about this initiative. Shana and Heather partnered with the Desis of Doylestown, a local 501c(3) non-profit organization as the fiscal sponsor. Together, they help organize a grassroots effort to collect donations in support of the grant, with the generous help of the Central Bucks community.

For the inaugural year of the grant in CBSD, seven exceptional educators have been nominated by parents, students, community members, and colleagues. These nominees are grateful for the opportunity to be recognized for their work, in the hopes that it then inspires other educators to create impactful programs/lessons.

This year's nominees are:

- Mary McDonald - CB West HS Family and Consumer Science Teacher. McDonald created West United and Student Unity Day that implements initiatives to increase cultural competence and promote awareness, understanding and acceptance in the school community.
- Rebecca Cartee-Haring - CB West HS English teacher. Cartee-Haring created lessons promoting understanding of the personal impact that bias and prejudice

can have as well as learning how to navigate the many arguments and fallacies that the students may encounter.

- Dr. James Massey - Unami MS Social Studies teacher. Through his career-long research of justice and equity, Dr. Massey implements his work into daily lessons with his students.
- Team Burgess, Hughes and Dunst : Andrew Burgess - Unami MS Social Studies teacher; Kelsey Hughes - Lenape MS English Teacher; Beca Dunst - Lenape MS Art Teacher. Burgess, Hughes, and Dunst helped create a Peer Leadership program. They then organized and implemented building-wide programs to gain the distinguished No Place For Hate status.
- Keith Willard - Holicong MS Social Studies Teacher. Willard organized a field trip to the Mercer Museum with all of the eight CBSD secondary schools' Diversity/GSA/SAGA clubs, bringing them together to experience the exhibit, "The Diversity of Bucks County".
- Nancy Flanagan Kelly - CB East HS Guidance Counselor. For the month of October, Flanagan Kelly organized National Bullying Prevention Month programming with the support of 6 student-led groups, bringing students from diverse backgrounds together.
- Matt Pecic - CB South HS Librarian.

The nomination process has ended for this school year but will resume in the Fall of the upcoming 2023-2024 school year. The winners will receive a monetary grant and a beautiful plaque to display. The winners and their work can be found on the website.

The goal is to grow the program within CBSD and then implement it into other school districts. No one should come to school and feel that they do not matter, that they will be bullied, or that they need to fear anything. We are all in this world together.

Please help shine a light on the educators in CBSD doing this good work. Visit the website [cbstandup4justice.com](http://cbstandup4justice.com) to make a contribution today.