



Jewish Federation[®]
OF COLLIER COUNTY

THE **STRENGTH** OF A PEOPLE.
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COLLIER EDUCATOR GRANT "STAND UP FOR JUSTICE"

Sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Collier County

A monetary grant will be made to the educator whose lesson(s) and/or activity(s) is selected as best meeting the criteria below. The purpose of this grant is to honor Collier County elementary, middle, and high school educators who strive to counter the prevailing tendency within today's popular culture for students to deride or denigrate others based upon difference. The lesson(s) or activity(s) should have as its major objective the purpose of instilling the positive character trait of "respect for others" in students. All applicants must have created lessons and/or activities of their own design or have successfully made adaptations from other programs and should be able to show evidence of a positive nature as a result of implementation. Successful applicants will be contacted and asked to submit a copy of the lesson(s) or activity(s) from the current school year, a description of its implementation, and evidence of its effectiveness. Applicants may include Collier County elementary, middle, and high school teachers, guidance counselors, school librarians, administrators, psychologists, and media specialists. Students, parents, colleagues, and community members are encouraged to nominate an educator. Self-nominations are also encouraged and accepted.

Applicant's name: Marilou Andrews Christina Anderson (Administration)

Applicant's email: andrewm2@collierschools.com andersch@collierschools.com

Number of years ^{in education} teaching: 39 yrs + 15 yrs

Grade or subject taught: elementary middle school + elementary

School: Lauvel Oak Elementary

School Address: 7800 Immokalee Road Naples FL 34119

Phone (daytime): 239 377-7400 Phone (evening): cell number 239-398-9021

On a separate page(s) with the name of the applicant on each page, please briefly:

- Describe the precipitating events that motivated you to initiate these lessons or activities.
- Describe the lesson(s) or activity(s); and if adapted from another source please reference.
- Explain how the lesson(s) or activity(s) teach students the importance of respecting others no matter what religious, racial, cultural, or other differences exist.
- Explain how it helped them counter bigotry and bullying and prepared them to stand up for justice.

If your application is selected as a finalist, you may be asked to provide evidence/proof of effectiveness such as but not limited to: a questionnaire, interviews, documented anecdotal conversations and/or observations, and etc.

Please complete the following if you have encouraged someone other than yourself to apply:

Your name: _____

Your email: _____

Your address: _____

Phone (daytime): _____ Phone (evening): _____

Your relationship to applicant: _____

Submit the completed form in writing, by email, or video format no later than **February 15, 2018**, to:

Beth Povlow, Educator Grant Coordinator
C/o JCRC, Jewish Federation of Collier County
2500 Vanderbilt Beach Road, Suite #2201, Naples, FL 34109

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The "A" Team Mrs. Andrews, Principal and Mrs. Anderson, Assistant Principal

Laurel Oak Elementary School

Describe the precipitating events that motivated you to initiate these lessons activities:

"Kindness is contagious, throw it around like confetti." Laurel Oak Elementary has some of the brightest and best students and teachers in Collier County Public Schools. As an "A" school since it opened, Laurel Oak prides itself in high test scores, rigorous teaching, and exceptional reading proficiency. However, the administration saw an increase in parent concerns that their children were being "bullied" by their classmates, discipline referrals were on the rise, and a "mean" culture was brewing within our school.

Rather than processing referrals and continuing to handle parent and student concerns focused on negative behaviors, administration laid the foundation to start a school-wide KINDNESS initiative. It was necessary to create an environment that created a positive message in everything we do at Laurel Oak. This included school-wide verbiage, parent communications, positive behavior support and growth mind-set. An "energy shift" was necessary to eliminate the "mean culture" we were experiencing, and to create an environment where kindness is used in our thoughts and actions with everyone on campus. Much like our Love and Logic parenting tool that we have always promoted and practiced, words and acts of kindness quickly spread throughout our campus.

Describe the activity(s); and if adapted from another source please reference.

Much of our school wide themes in the past, focused on student achievement. "The person talking is the person learning", and "Shining brighter" to name a few. Not this year! Although high student achievement continues to be our goal, the 2017-2018 school year gave administration the chance to launch its first ever kindness theme.

Administration knew that if staff bought into this initiative, kindness would "spread like confetti." The Administration modeled this kindness initiative in everything they did with staff:

- Kindness bars as mailbox treats
- First week of school kindness note for every teacher as we visited their classrooms
- Kindness recognition board in the mailroom for staff to post a Kindness message about a colleague
- Monday homemade sweet treats for staff
- Holiday themed candy in the mailroom
- Kindness themed guidance lessons in each individual classroom by the guidance counselor
- Kindness messages and recognitions on the morning news show

The response from teachers and staff was overwhelmingly positive. Within days of students arriving on campus, the positive energy in and around our campus was amazing! To name a few:

- Kindness magnets all over our mailroom
- Kindness rock initiative in teacher classrooms
- Increase in positive referrals when a student is kind
- Positive quotes all over teacher classroom white boards
- Decrease in student discipline referrals

The 2017-2018 also gave us the opportunity to launch our school-wide Kindness pledge. Every day, students start their day with the morning announcements, by reciting our school wide kindness pledge reinforcing why it is important to be kind. The students loved the pledge so much, that within 2 weeks, our first ever kindness song was launched. Created by a fifth grade teacher, Bruce Wisser, who is also a professional performer, it became a quick hit on the morning news program and a couple of our fifth grade girls choreographed a dance to go with it.

As we expected, our kindness theme was spreading. It was now time for our related arts team to get involved! Every related arts teacher found a way to incorporate kindness into their content standards. Students experienced kindness in every class, including related arts.

- Music: Spring and Winter concert to include kindness themed songs
- Technology: 3D-printing to include heart key chains for students who leave LOE
- PE: heart healthy initiative
- Art: kindness themed art projects

Explain how the activity(s) teach students the importance of respecting others no matter what religious, racial, cultural, or other differences exist.

Kindness is contagious! Students quickly embraced our theme and practiced kindness in every way! In a school that consists of a primarily Caucasian demographic, we have started to see a shift with a slight increase in our Hispanic population. In fact, Laurel Oak Elementary has the highest rate of increase in student population in all elementary schools in the district. Kindness was necessary to welcome the increasing number of new students to our school. Rather than look at student differences based on religion, race, or cultural background, students began to look at their classmates as a family and partnership within the classroom. We are all "LOE Dolphins"regardless of race, religion, or cultural background. With Kindness comes Giving!

Here are just a few of the many acts of kindness within our school:

- 2nd grade students used their Champions for Learning Grant to visit a nursing home (The Chateau) in Naples, Fl. Students sang several kindness songs for the retirement home residents. Students felt so much pride about sharing their talent to lighten the hearts of their newly made elderly friends

- K-Kids (the primary student group for the Kiwanis organization of North Naples) Toiletry Drive for poor children in Immokalee
- Student Council held a "pet drive" for food/treats/blankets/bleach to go the Human Society of Naples
- Laces of Love: our students, staff, and parents donated new shoes to be used for children in our community
- 1st grade students in one classroom were featured on Wink News (and our morning show) having a birthday party but in lieu of presents they asked their guests to make monetary donations to a woman in their neighborhood who had a major loss due to hurricane Irma
- Believing in each other: we are switching from a "fixed mindset" to a school wide "growth mindset" philosophy that reinforces the need to be kind and understanding because EVERYONE can learn, grow, and improve
- LOE's A+ monies: In the past 6 years that the school was awarded a bonus because of school grade and student achievement, the staff had always voted that 90% of the money be divided among the instructional staff and 10% among the non-instructional staff. This year the vote was 100% of the money to be equally distributed among all staff working the previous school year.

Explain how it helped student's counter bigotry and bullying and prepared them to stand up for justice.

It is such a delight to see how students now react to challenges and conflict within the classroom and school. Students have become more empathetic in understanding, and much better at using respectful appropriate words towards others. When administration does have to speak with students that have had conflicts, the students use their words and are much calmer and kinder to each other than have been in the past.

Students have now become "problem solvers" in the discipline process instead of "contributors." The number of classroom positive referrals for exceptional behavior has increased as compared to last year at this time. Additionally, the number of classroom discipline referrals has decreased as compared to last year. We hope that this trend will continue to the end of the school year and for years to come.

Finally, teachers have implemented a new classroom job titled "kindness ambassador." This person is responsible for welcoming new students to the classroom and helping the teacher when conflict arises in the classroom.

In looking forward to the 2018-2019 school year, we would like to extend our kindness theme into proper classroom and lunchroom etiquette/manners.