



2018 AWARDS

Alaska Head Start Association



October 15, 2018

Table Of Contents

Beating the Odds	1
Head Start Father of the Year	2
Head Start Mother of the Year	3
School District Collaboration	4
Early Head Start Teacher of the Year	5
Program Policy Council	6
Cook of the Year	7
Family Advocate of the Year	8
Maintenance Staff of the Year	9
Home Visitor of the Year	10
Administrative Support Staff of the Year	11
Assistant Teacher of the Year	12-13
Content Area Specialist of the Year	14
Teacher of the Year	15
Humanitarian of the Year	16
Community Advocate of the Year	17
Leadership Award of the Year	18
Assistant or Deputy Director of the Year	19
Bus Driver of the Year	20
Corporate Award	21
Cultural Awareness	21
Head Start Director of the Year	22
All 2018 AHSA Award Nominees	23

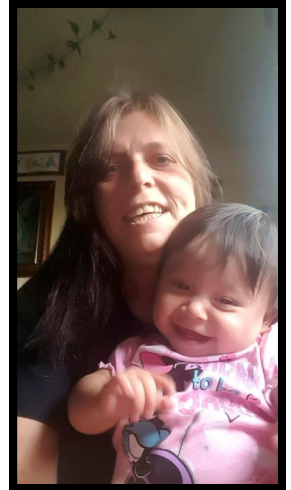
Beating the Odds



Heather LeBlanc

When Heather found out she was pregnant with Angela, she was determined to make a better life for her and her baby. It wasn't easy to break old habits, leave an abusive relationship, or overcome challenges with her own disabilities, but since day one, Heather has made her child her highest priority. Angela has many special needs including FASD and developmental delays. Heather is extremely organized and attentive to meeting Angela's daily needs, getting her to multiple therapies a week, and never missing a medical appointment. Despite being legally blind, experiencing economic hardships, having a limited support system and lack of transportation, Heather is resourceful and determined to see Angela succeed in life. Heather adores her child and absolutely deserves to be considered for an award as she is certainly "beating the odds."

-Victoria Ross



What does it mean to "Beat the Odds?" Persevering against troubles and situations that other may crumble to? Or does it mean finding a light at the end of the tunnel and then working, inch by inch, to step out of the tunnel and into that light? These are things that come to mind when I think of Heather LeBlanc's journey as a parent. She has had a life that would crush so many, yet here she is smiling and bringing joy to those around her.

I had the pleasure of meeting Heather and her daughter Angela early last summer and have been constantly wowed by the love and dedication Heather shows for Angela. It has been a wonderful year getting to know them both and watch as Heather uses the suggestions both I, as the Early Head Start Home Visitor, and the team from PIC give her. Angela has made beautiful progress, this because of the daily work her mother puts in. It is a highlight of my week coming to see Heather and Angela and hearing the different ways Heather has worked with Angela, even when the ideas didn't work out or Angela has resisted. Still Heather persists.

Heather came from a rough background and has had other children raised outside of her home. When Angela came along Heather made the choice to say not this time and changed her life so that she could raise this beautiful little baby. She made the promise that this child would have a good life and would have a mom who was always there and put this child first. Heather has made good on that promise over and over. It is not easy raising a child who has learning difficulties or needs various therapies weekly, on top of frequent doctor's appointments. Heather does this all with a smile, from organizing transportation to appointments, weekly home visits from EHS and PIC (sometimes both in the same week), to doing many follow-up appointments as different medical/developmental concerns have come up.

Heather is also quick to give back. There are many weeks that I walk out of a home visit with clothes, toys, or other various infant to toddler supplies that Angela has outgrown and Heather has asked me to share with families who need it. I have seen her quick to help other parents or children at events she has attended, always smiling and offering a kind word. She is right there helping to clean up at the end of events, or asking if she can help out in any way.

Heather does not let her past define her, always striving to do and be better so that her daughter may know and have a good life. For that very reason it is my honor to nominate Heather LeBlanc for the Beating the Odds Award this year. -Rebecca Larson

Head Start Father of the Year



Richard Savageau



I would like to nominate Richard Savageau for Father of the Year. I have had the pleasure of working with him and his two foster twin toddlers this past school year in our Early Head Start Center-Based program. To be a foster parent that speaks volumes about his character. Add the fact he served our country you know he is truly giving of himself. The family also are fosters for the infant sibling of the twins in our program and are enrolled in the Home based EHS program for that child.

Richard meets weekly with our Home Visitor with that infant who is in our Early Head Start Home-Based program. You should see the schedule Richard has every week for the 3 children! He works with other local programs such as OCS, WIC, and PIC since the twins have IFSP's for their delays. He balances their PIC visits at the house and has PIC come to Early Head Start to work with us. He takes the children to OT/PT throughout the week different days different times. The twins attend our program regularly Monday-Friday generally about 5 to 7 hours daily with varied care schedules because of all their appointments. Richard arranged it where our last Teacher and Family Advocate Home Visits were at the OT/PT office so we could see the techniques they use. We were then able to get materials like yoga balls and straws to help with the twins delays in the classroom setting. Richard is great about keeping us informed on their progress and appointment dates. He has worked in getting the kids seen for vision, hearing and dental concerns. He even got the children special orthopedic shoes to help them learn to walk.

Richard is also great about being involved in the program. He is at all Parent/Teacher Conferences, Home Visits, and also completes surveys for us and gives input and his feedback. He attends Parent Volunteer day every month and knows all the children in the center because of that. He takes the time to talk with the other children too and makes funny faces and silly voices to make them smile. He is not afraid to get down on the ground and be at the children's level. He always takes the time to say good-bye to all the children too and it brings delight to the children getting that special attention. He brings his family to Family Night and then even stayed and helped clean-up last time because he was chatting with us staff. Many of days he has stayed at drop-off or pick-up chatting with me about all kinds of things from the controversy of football players taking a knee during the National Anthem to his military experience to politics. He came to our recent field trip to the zoo, he is so kind, patient and nurturing. He is such a positive male role model for the foster children and all my children at the center. Richard is very deserving of Father of Year Award. –Selina Ellis

Head Start Mother of the Year



Adelita Ortiz

I would like to nominate Adelita Ortiz as Mother of the Year. She is a teen mom that I have worked with these last two school years. Last school year she started in our Early Head Start Home-Based program. Once we had an opening in the full-day Center-Based program she transferred since she was attending ASD alternative high school Crossroads which was located in our same building and is for pregnant and parenting teen moms. She moved from Alaska last summer because of family hardship, but that didn't work out. She came back to Alaska and re-enrolled at Crossroads, starting the semester late. She was able to get her enrolled in our Early Head Start Center-Based program.



Adelita worked hard to get her diploma. Her family helped with transportation which was a big relief. She also enrolled in extra CAN classes at King Career Center and attended school extra hours. Some days school was from 8am to 1:15pm and then she would do her clinicals for 1:50pm to 9:30pm. Even with us offering up to 10 hours of care in one day, Adelita never had her son attend more than 6 hours. She would pick him up and spend time with him even if only for the drive to her clinicals. In one semester she got done what it takes regular high school students a year to do. All while having her Toddler son by her side and he was always her number one priority. Adelita has grown so much, as a parent, student and strong independent women. She attended many parenting classes in the community these past couple years always checking with staff about her son's progress. He is a lot of ear problems and because of her taking him to the doctor and emergency room he got tubes placed in his ears this past winter. Adelita is a great listener and has faced many challenges, but hardship never stops her from staying positive and smiling. Her resilience and determination enabled her to meet her goal of graduating with her high school diploma by May 2018. She added receiving her CNA cord which motivated her to stick with it even on those hard days. She graduated on a Friday and the first Monday afterwards she already had full-time employment so she could keep her child care assistance and keep her son in our EHS program. She plans to go to college and become an RN. I hope I am around to attend that graduation! Adelita has a bright future and is very deserving of the Mother of The Year Award.

Thank you for your consideration,
Selina Ellis

I would like to nominate Adelita Ortiz for Mother of the Year. I have been able to work with Adelita Ortiz for the past year and seen tremendous growth in her. Adelita Ortiz is a mother at our Kid's Corp. Inc. Early Head Start and has a loving 18 month old son now. As busy as she was with her schooling, Adelita was always able to attend Parent Volunteer day and Family Nights, home visits and parent/teacher conferences. Adelita is ambitious, determined and motivated. During spring of 2018 Adelita enrolled in a CNA program at KCC and got in, she would bring her son to school and have a friend pick up her son so that she could do her CNA program (which lasted

until 9:30pm). Adelita was determined to get her CNA cord and she did! She is already at work on her goal of becoming a nurse. It is an inspiration to see her grow from being a teen parent to being a full-time, skilled care giver. I believe Adelita Ortiz deserves Mother of the Year award because she is selfless and willing to work hard to achieve her goal. With everything she has been through, I can say I am happy she has built positive relationships with everyone around her and stayed focused on her hopes and dreams. –Kattie Sutherland

School District Collaboration



Terri Dreeszen



I would like to nominate Terri Dreeszen for an AHSA award of excellence in the category of School District Collaboration. She is a special education teacher for the Anchorage School District CARE Team and our special education services representative at Kids Corps, Inc. Head Start. This is my first year working with Terri and I was astounded at her drive and compassion for what she does.

Terri consistently advocates for children to stay in mainstream classes because staying in a mainstream environment is more beneficial. Terri then provides one to one support, teaching assistant access, individualized training, and class resources. This is all on top of her required service hours! Terri did not do this in one instance, but many instances throughout her time at Head Start. It is who she is as person and anything less is not serving the child.

This year Terri took an active role in advocating for one of KCI's centers. The center has a very high ceiling, which leads to persistent high sound levels and echos. She wrote a letter describing the need for a sound barrier, the effects on behavior management and special education and included a report on sound decibels in the classroom so everyone could truly understand the dramatic effect the noise was having in the room. Partly due to this, we were able to secure funding to get the needed ceiling panels.

Terri even made herself available and attended field trips to the zoo and swimming pool to help support the children and classroom staff. In these instances, she was able to work one on one with children with disabilities providing individualized support, educational opportunities and made it easy for the entire class to get the most out of the outings.

This year while qualifying children with developmental delays she did not stop at only the children enrolled in Head Start, she engaged with parents about their younger children, helping them understand the developmental norms and expectations and where to get support in town with outside services as well as ASD evaluations. We are truly blessed to have Terri working at KCI. Her dedication, support and passion for her job and children keeps us all striving to be the best we can be, in our own lives and for the children and families we serve. Steffi Redhead, KCI Disabilities & Mental Health Coordinator. -Steffi Redhead

I believe Terri is truly deserving of the award. During my fifteen years working at KCI, I have never seen another ASD CARE Team member as dedicated and passionate as she is. It is evident that Terri genuinely cares for the child and families that Kids' Corps serves! - Charles Freeman

Early Head Start Teacher of the Year



Chelsea Knoph

I am writing to nominate Chelsea Knoph for our AHSA EHS Teacher of the Year Award. She has been working under my direct supervision since she started as an EHS Assistant Teacher in March 2017. She applied and became Toddler Teacher a few months after she started. In her time with us she has been working hard on her professional development. We recently renewed her Infant/Toddler CDA.
-Selina Ellis



Chelsea has been working full-time all while taking part-time UAA college classes in the evenings. She is a superb teammate who supports the professional development of other staff at the center. For example, Chelsea was the Practicum mentor this past Spring semester for another KCI EHS teacher who is pursuing a degree at UAA. This responsibility required her to work 150 hours over the semester with her colleague in support. They collaborated together on variety of projects; as the mentor Chelsea had to ensure documentation was completed on time and provide specific feedback about her peer's activities in the classroom. In addition, Chelsea is also supporting our EHS AT with her Infant/Toddler CDA by proof-reading documents and role modeling good classroom practices.

Chelsea is diligent about making sure we meet children's health needs. In her classroom she has a child who needs 5 different medications. She makes sure the medications are administered appropriately and shares the medication log with the family daily. She keeps very detailed records about the child's responses to the medications, including photos and written notes. In fact, the allergy clinic providing care for the child. was very impressed with the documentation she provided the family and requested we continue doing so we can learn everything the child is allergic too.

Chelsea works habitually with her families for regular school attendance and for them to attend events. If you were to look in Child Plus under Family Contact you would see the dedication she has to serve her families. From August until now in May, attendance in classroom met or exceeded 90% every month except October and April. In January she had 100% attendance with all of her children attending all 17 scheduled class days. Her children are often here for 8-10 hours and she spends a majority of her day in the classroom with them. Chelsea's teaching style and personality are a great fit for EHS Toddler Teacher. I know by her being selected for this award, it will be so meaningful for her.

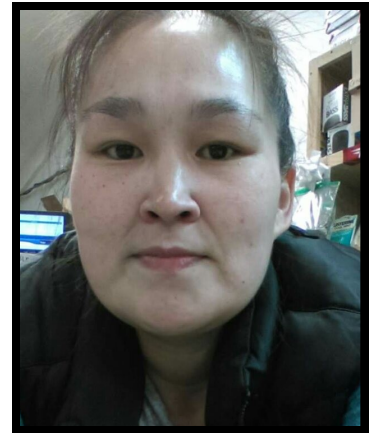
I am nominating Chelsea Knoph for the wonderful service she has give to me and my son for the past year now, my son struggled with speech development and Chelsea was on it right away finding me resources where I can help him , trying new methods at school that would benefit him , she comes to me home on our visits which makes my life so much better it makes this daycare such a wonderful experience knowing I have someone who truly cares about my son and our family. She is the best and the most deserving for this award thank you. -Emelina Haring

I would like to nominate Chelsea Knoph for EHS Teacher of the Year. She is an incredible teacher who goes the miles to help her children and her coworkers. She went above and beyond with working with me as a practicum student in her classroom and guiding me in the classroom while doing her duty as a teacher. When my professor came to visit, she mention that Chelsea goes above and beyond in social-emotional with the children and works well with the children and is able to meet their needs. Chelsea lets her parents know what she is doing in the classroom with their children and regularly seeks parents' input. She even goes that extra mile to help parents find resources and activities that parents can work on with their children. She checks in with the other teachers to see if they need help with anything, she works alongside her assistant teacher to help her with her CDA, and she'll come check into the classroom and ask if everything is okay. It is spectacular to work with Chelsea and I believe Chelsea Knoph is will make a great candidate for EHS Teacher of the Year. Thank you for your consideration.
-Kattie Sutherland

Program Policy Council



Nicole Therchik



Nicole is always helping out at her local Head Start center. She has one-on-one time with her own child and sometimes reads to a small group of children or helps with a project. She frequently helps out in the classroom or in the kitchen to assist with whatever is needed.

Nicole has been the Parent Committee chairperson in Toksook Bay for at least the past four years. During that time she was elected as the representative to the Regional Parent Committee (RPC) four consecutive years. The RPC for the Southwest Region selected Nicole as either their Representative or Alternate to the Rural CAP Child Development Policy Council (CDPC) for three of those four years. In that role, Nicole traveled with the CDPC to Juneau to advocate for the needs of young children in rural Alaska. This past year Nicole enlisted the support of RPC Representatives in the Southwest region to advocate for funding support for safe and appropriate community playgrounds to help support the physical development health goals for preschool children in remote communities. Nicole is a strong advocate for the preschool children in her community and her region.

-Nancy Stallings

In 2014-15 Nicole was elected as the representative from Toksook Bay Head Start to the South West Regional Parent Committee (RPC). That Committee elected her as there alternate representative to the Rural Cap Child Development Policy Council (CDPC).

In 2015-16 Nicole was again elect as a Regional Parent Committee Representative and was elected to be the representative to the CDPC.

2016-17 and 2017-18 Again she was elected as RPC Rep.

2017-18 She was served was again as the South West Region CDPC Rep.

Nicole has been our center's parent committee chair since 2014. She would check up on the teacher of how things are running at the school. No matter how busy she may be she would give her time to volunteer during school hours by helping the cook or the teachers in the classroom. She has been a good role model for young parents and children. - Monica Angaiak

Cook of the Year



Penny Edin



Penny is one of our longest standing cooks at RurAL CAP.

When I walked into her kitchen, it became very evident that she loved her job and the kids. Parents that were visiting the classroom on the day that I was there would stop into the kitchen and say “hello” with a hug and confide in her with details of their lives, both successes and struggles. Penny later told me one of the parents in particular attended Head Start along with her brother and now two of her kids are attending and another in the coming years. It became very clear that she had made such an impact on their family through Head Start that Penny herself creates a safe and inviting place for them to land.

She lacks no passion in the kitchen either. She is consistently achieving 100% in reimbursement and goes above and beyond for each child. After each meal, the children ask to say “thank you to Ms. Penny” and she comes to the edge of the kitchen where they can see her and then rush to her to give her a hug.

She encourages new foods by letting the kids view them on the counter and taking the time to talk about them when the children inquire and then adding them to a meal so they can taste them. I am very thankful that I have Penny in Sterling to provide me an example of such a wonderful and loving cook. -Keriann Shine

Family Advocate of the Year



Martha Wagele



There is not an award category that accurately describes Martha Wagele's position and contribution to Head Start families. Like many members of our Alaska Head Start family, Martha fulfills many roles. At Homer Head Start, Martha serves as both the Family Advocate and Local Program Supervisor. While overseeing the program and supervising six staff, Martha ensures that 20 children and their families get services needed to reach their full potential.

Homer Head Start started duration services in April 2017 and Martha responded with a commitment to make sure that children and families would be well-served under the new model. Before the program year began, Martha attended work groups and studied literature to understand exemplary environments for trauma-informed care.

Then Martha put her creative energy and artistic talents to work. She painted a wall mural of baby birds in the children's listening center. She engaged all staff and service providers to create flowers for display with staff photos, names, and positions so families could feel safe knowing every adult involved in their child's care. Throughout the program year, Martha greeted families with a smile at the door during arrival and departure each day. Whenever a family needed extra time, a listening ear, more information, or additional services, Martha welcomed families to the "green room," a private, comfortable space with plants and herb teas served in glass mugs.

As in previous years, Martha continued to work with each family, connecting them to resources and empowering them to engage in their child's early education with confidence. Martha worked closely with the teaching team and families to ensure the emotional safety of every child, especially around the new routine of napping/resting at school. As the school year drew to a close, Martha ensured that families had access to services needed during the summer. And nearly one month after the program year ended, Martha went above and beyond to ensure that a partnering service provider had books and materials to provide a familiar and emotionally comforting routine for a child now in their care.

Additionally, Martha was one of the first Family Advocates to embrace the new requirements in the Head Start Program Performance Standards. Martha became certified in our adopted parenting curriculum, jumping in with both feet, while asking thoughtful questions and sharing implementation insights to her colleagues. Martha Wagele demonstrates exemplary service as a Family Advocate with no limit to her kindness and compassion for children and their families. It is my pleasure to nominate her for the ASHA Family Advocate of the year award.

-Terri L Mach

Maintenance Staff of the Year



Ronnie Paul



We are nominating Ronnie Paul from Pilot Station as Maintenance Staff of the Year.

Ronnie is not only an incredible Maintenance Specialist, with MacGyver like skills, he is a great person! Ronnie is known by all for his willingness to help out wherever needed.

At Pilot Station's Head Start you will often see him cooking in the kitchen one morning and later that same day you will see him in the classroom helping teachers with transitions and ensuring all children are safe and properly supervised. We often ask him to step into different roles and wear multiple hats during the day. Although we do ask nicely, I believe even if we didn't ask him he would see the need and willingly volunteer. Ronnie is the first person his Regional Manager calls when there are facility issues at other sites. If one of our Maintenance Staff is struggling to find a solution, one call to Ronnie and the project is back on track. He is willing to take time out of his busy schedule to take phone calls from other Maintenance Specialists and help walk them through the process step by step.

Ronnie has offered his time and services to be a mentor for other Maintenance Specialists at RurAL CAP. He is always willing to travel to other sites to help them maintain their facilities. He even travels to sites to train new Maintenance Specialists to help them start with a solid foundation.

Ronnie is a positive male figure in the lives of the children at Pilot Station's Head Start. The children see him as more of an uncle or father figure due to his kind nature and the attention he gives to each one of them. If the teaching staff need an extra hand for field trips Ronnie is always there to pitch in. He is trusted by the community and all the Head Start staff.

This program year Ronnie worked hard preparing for the Type II Portable Fire Extinguisher Test. After taking the test he was awarded his certification. The Type II Portable Fire Extinguisher Certification allows Ronnie to maintain and inspect our fire extinguishers. By holding this certification Ronnie has relieved the agency of great costs that were associated with flying fire protection agencies out to the site to perform this work.

Thank you Ronnie for your hard work, dedication, and sacrifice you make for Head Start families on a daily basis. You are a true hero in the eyes of, not only our Head Start children, but also in the eyes of the Head Start staff. Ronnie, if you have time could you come help us install some exterior doors in Hooper Bay? All kidding aside, for once we don't want to take this time to ask you for something. We would like to honor you and let you know how much you mean to us. Thank you again from the bottom of our hearts for your tireless efforts!

-Palassa Beans

Home Visitor of the Year



Julia Kashatok



I am nominating Julia Kashatok from Akiak Alaska for Home Visitor of the Year. Julia is a pillar in the field of home visiting within the community of Akiak and the State of Alaska. This June marks Julia's 27th year working for Rural Community Action Program's Early Head Start and Head Start program in Akiak.

Julie's first position with RurAL CAP was in 1991 as a Prenatal Educator. Shortly thereafter she branched out to serve prenatal mothers and children up to age 3. Her initial impact on the children and families of Akiak was in the capacity of a Home Visitor from 1991 to 2004. In 2004, due to her strong organizational skillset and her ability to work well with children and families, she was promoted into the position of Local Program Supervisor. In this position she supervised Home Visitors as well as the local Head Start classroom. If this role wasn't difficult enough, she also volunteered to be a Teacher Assistant for one year in the classroom while still carrying out all her supervisory duties. Julia initially stepped into her role as supervisor because there was a need for a leader within the community to strengthen and grow the Head Start program. Although Julia successfully led the Head Start and Early Head Start team from 2004 to 2009 she always had a soft spot for home visiting. In 2009 Julia handed over the supervisory reigns to one of her peers and entered back into the world of Early Head Start as a Home Visitor.

From 2009 to this present day Julia has been impacting families with Early Head Start's unique approach. Typically when families sign up for home visiting services in Akiak they expect Julia to teach their children their 1,2,3's and A,B,C's. Families are often surprised on their first visit to hear Julia say "Within our program the parents will be the child's first teacher." Julia has seen that look on many parents faces, a look of slight disappointment when the family realizes that this is going to be a joint venture, that this home visit will not be an opportunity to sit back and watch their child be taught by their new teacher. Julia strongly emphasizes partnerships with her families. Within these partnerships she models the activities for families in a way that makes them feel confident to engage in the process with their child. Families feel at ease when they are around Julia. She has a positive personality that rubs off on all those she comes in contact with. Through her education and experience Julia has acquired many skill sets over the years that have had a long lasting impact on her community. With the use of Early Head Start assessments and screenings she has been able to help many families identify developmental delays. Julia knows that in the rural setting a missed developmental delay can often go unnoticed until it is too late for corrective action. Families often thank Julia for working closely with their child. Some families believe that if it wasn't for Julia their child may have had long term gross motor, vision, or hearing loss.

Although Julia is a home visitor at heart, she continues to mentor and support the current site supervisor in Akiak. She doesn't do it in a strong "this is how I always did it way." She allows the current supervisor to find her own style and her own voice. Julia is one of those leaders who leads by example and helps others discover their own strengths.

Julia, thank you so much for your 27 years of service. We are very sad to hear that you will be retiring at the end of this program year. But, with that said, we know your legacy will live on! Thank you for all those years trudging through the snow, battling river floods, and waking up every morning willing and excited to make a difference in the lives of families! -Drew Hansen

Administrative Support Staff of the Year

Francisca Charriez



Francisca is the Site Manager for our McKinley Extended Day Site and she does an outstanding job! She is diligent about the safety and well being of all the children we serve, ensuring quality learning and fun. She is also a wonderful advocate for all of her staff. She is easily approachable with our concerns and gives quick responses to any problems that arise for us. I feel she is why we have such a great program!

Francisca's commitment to FNA shines through each and every day. Her warm smile and personal greetings make each adult and child feel welcomed into our program as she works with families and staff each day. She is an integral part of our program and she goes above and beyond to provide families and staff with the support, information and resources they need. Families and children are Francisca's number one priority whether she is helping to plan or organize amazing "Family Nights" or providing individual support to staff or families who have specific needs. Francisca does everything with such grace and compassion. She is passionate about children and working diligently with families to provide the best opportunities for them.

No matter how crazy a day or week may feel for staff, she is always upbeat and positive and helps those around her to remain hopeful and positive, focused on program goals and meeting the needs of her staff and families. She is a positive role model for staff in the FNA Head Start 0-5 program because in the past she has been a classroom aide, teacher and then a family advocate. She knows what it is like to work in a classroom around busy meal time routines, diapering or potty training, naptimes and learning experiences as well as what it is to work with families in their homes on home visits. She is always there to help cover breaks or cuddle a small child who needs some extra attention or help is needed. She does it all with an open heart and warm inviting smile on her face. Francisca Charriez-Miranda is a gift to the FNA Head Start 0-5 program and we are so lucky to have her. Our program and the community is a better place because of her commitment and hard work.

-Amanda Roth-Weisbrich and Terri Schellekens

Assistant Teacher of the Year

Joshua Dumaine



I am pleased to nominate Mr. Joshua Dumaine for the AHSA Assistant Teacher of the Year Award. Mr. Joshua provides a safe and secure environment that promotes play at FNA Head Start 0-5 Birch Preschool Classroom. By working with this gentleman I have discovered how compassionate, efficient and resourceful he is. Mr. Dumaine is always willing to work in partnership with others to meet the needs of the families and children served. His skills do not end in the classroom, but he also always projects a warm, cheerful attitude to our families and coworkers. If any resource is needed and you ask Josh; he goes above and beyond to provide you useful information that will not only benefit one child but the whole family.

A couple times a week this Educator is responsible to perform our playground daily check, he makes sure it is safe for children to play and reports to Site Coordinator if he finds any hazards with plans of correction. He not only provides the information but always provides thoughtful solutions taking in consideration that children's safety comes first. Joshua is best known by Josh, Yoshi and Joshala. He has worked very hard to build a positive and strong relationship with children that will have a positive lifelong impact. It is an amazing experience to visit his classroom and see those wonderful teacher-child connections because Josh engages in one-to-one interactions and takes advantage of any teachable moment that arise.

He always goes down to child eye level while using a pleasant, calm voice, providing a warm, responsive and developmentally appropriate response. While at play Josh follows the child's lead and interests, he is their playground "Rock Star". He is not only loved by the children in his classroom but by all the children at our center. If you pass by our playground you will know where Joshala is because a group of children will be engaged in creative physical activities like; bug hunting, running, jumping, throwing balls. You will see him in a child size outdoors table providing water to keep them hydrated after intense physical activity. In the classroom he helps children understand the expectations while redirecting them when they engage in misunderstood behaviors. Mr. Josh listens to children and encourages them to listen to their peers. The best part of working with this Educator is that he acknowledges children for their accomplishments, efforts and encourages them positively to complete challenging tasks successfully.

It is a pleasure to work with someone who is always willing to share knowledge while remaining humble. Someone who works with passion and that always is looking to expand his cognitive skills through professional development. Josh is a Parent, an Associate Educator in FNA Head Start 0-5, a Soldier in the National Guard and also an outstanding UAF Student. I have witnessed how he resolve conflicts and handles difficult situations with remarkable patience and admirable tact. In the community, he goes out of his way to help individuals in need because he loves people, works very hard and always lift the spirits of those around him. I strongly believe that Joshua Dumaine is a respectful gentleman who strives to make both the Fairbanks Community and FNA Head Start 0-5 a better place. - Francisca Charriez-Miranda

I would like to nominate Joshua Dumaine for Assistant Teacher of the year for Head Start. Teacher Joshua has been two of our son's teacher for the past year and half. Our sons have grown so much from Teacher Joshua care and love.

Teacher Joshua or "Josh u la" if you are our 4 year old sets an example for the children every day. He remains calm in stressful situations. He looks for the strengths in the child and builds on those strengths while focusing

on the areas of growth. My oldest son has behavioral challenges and Joshua's support of him and the process to help get him diagnose and the correct services even when not his teacher has meant the world to our 5 year old.

Josh serves in the military as well and when out on training, our 4 year old counts the days till Soldier Teacher Joshua returns.

Our son loves to go to tell Josh what he does and looks forward to school, our son struggles to transition into the classroom so many times drop of is hard, Josh reminds him that they will go the window and that I will wave, Josh has worked hard on maintaining a strong relationship with our son through brining in topics that our son is interest in.

Teacher Josh has been a constant in a very changing classroom with teachers. Joshua is eager to learn and supports my sons IEP plan as well brings new ideas and strategies to the table to help when challenges arise with his behavior. Joshua keeps best practice and relationships at the front of working with not only my family but all families. Joshua goes beyond to help families and to support families.

Please consider Teacher Josh for this award -Angi

Content Area Specialist of the Year

Rebecca Ginn



Rebecca Ginn has worked as an Enrollment Coordinator for Head Start Programs for over 10 years. She still remembers when she packed her things and drove with her son to Alaska leaving her life behind ready for new Adventures.

She started her Head Start journey in TCC Head Start and is been part of FNA Head Start 0-5 for 4 years. Rebecca works with her heart and have gone through lots of challenging experiences while providing services to families with no regrets but with lots of joy.

She graciously shares some of her experiences with co-workers to motivate them like: how she has traveled to numerous villages to ensure children have their enrollment paperwork in compliance. Rebecca still remembers the many times while in the villages she has to travel in the back of a pick up to take a rest in a Head Start program because the village doesn't have hotels or they were booked and in another instances how she carried a book to do self care while she stayed in a hotel. She also remembers how many times she had to travel using four tracks or snow machines to arrive her destination but is very grateful for all the knowledge acquired and for those who have shown her the beauty of the Alaska Native Culture. When asked how she felt about those experiences she gladly says that she learned a lot from them and that she is in the program to aid those families in need to provide a good Head start to those children in life.

This lady is very reliable, she always goes above and beyond to meet the needs of the families like when she moves her schedule because a single mom can't miss any hours at work. Yes, she has done enrollment meetings as early as 7:00 am and also on the weekends for those families that only can meet those days.

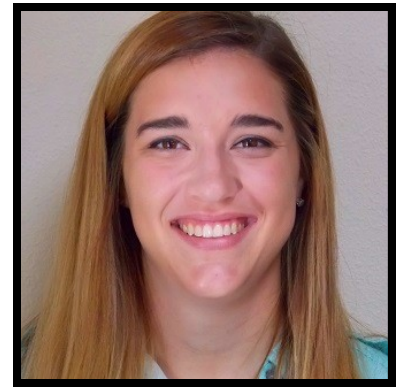
She always make sure that we are fully enrolled but also has taught us how important is to refer to the Performance Standards when we have questions. She always strives to keep our attendance over 85% and works hand to hand with Family Advocates, Receptionists, Coordinators and families. If a family is having challenges like transportation; she always offer them an alternate option in our program to meet their needs.

Using Child Plus she is a Pro, she has taught me how to print reports quickly when needed, the importance of entering data and how easy PIR's are generated when we are proactive using the system. I am please to nominate Rebecca Ginn to the Content Area Specialist of the Year because this lady not only strives to build positive and strong relationships with parents, children, staff but the community in general while do recruitment. This lady never says no when she is needed; she has done the Health Screenings, cover the reception and educators lunches with great attitude. Rebecca is a great asset for FNA Head Start 0-5.

-Francisca Charriez-Miranda

Teacher of the Year

Sarah Banks



Ms. Sarah has been my son Wyatt's teacher for two years. She works hard to get to know all of the children in the classroom and develops positive relationships with the families as well. Wyatt has an amazing relationship with her and all of his teachers. He is especially fond of Ms. Sarah and would say, "She is the smartest person in the world!" Sarah has enhanced his learning over the last two years to the point that we call him POTUS. POTUS stands for President of the United States. Thank you Sarah! You have done an amazing job fostering Wyatt's education in a positive and creative way to further his learning. She has made a huge impact in my son's learning by teaching him about different animals and dinosaurs. During his learning, he has developed quite an extensive vocabulary and a creative imagination. He loves the scientific names for the dinosaurs and he is quick to tell you if they are a carnivore, herbivore or an omnivore. She truly uses his interests and builds his learning on them in the classroom.

One week, she did an activity in the classroom where all of the students wore scrubs like the teachers. The students were the teachers and directed a meal time and helped each other during open centers. Wyatt was ecstatic to wear one of her scrubs and become a teacher for a day! Ms. Sarah has taken his creative imagination to another level! He is constantly coming to class in costumes that he has made himself. He usually wears a scarf and gloves to school imagining that he is a ninja or karate kid. I love that he brings his learning home on a daily basis. When he tells me about his day, his favorite memories are the things Ms. Sarah said or did during class.

Sarah has helped him develop positive interactions with his peers by modeling for him and teaching him empathy. Wyatt has learned leadership skills in the classroom such as standing up for his classmates and modeling best behavior. Sarah has worked very hard to engage him in learning to be a leader in the classroom. He now helps the children in his classroom and his siblings at home with their behaviors. He has developed such empathy in the classroom he would sit next to a little girl that was developmentally delayed and be sure to help her and include her in the activities they were doing. I don't think he understood how much of an impact he made for the little girl. Sarah has taught all of the children that it is okay to be different and some people need a little more help than others.

I feel that if we had more teachers like Ms. Sarah in the world, the world would be full of empathy, kind words and smart children! -Deyone Shults

Humanitarian of the Year

Angela Adams



I would like to nominate Angela Adams from Fairbanks Safe Riders Program from Fairbanks Memorial Hospital for the Humanitarian Award for 2018. Angela has shown and provided extraordinary support to our of our Head Start programs this past few years.

Angela was instrumental in working with both of the local Head Start programs this past year 2017-2018, collaborating through GRACO Company for Car seats for our families. FNA Head Start families alone this 2017-2018 school year received over 125 new car seats through Angela's effort and support. Over the 3 years the number of new car seats families have received is around 250.

Angela's encouragement for advocates and teachers to become car seat techs has lead 6 staff members over the past few years become certified in installing and helping with car seats. Each car seat tech is now able to provide one on one education information to each individual family while checking and installing car seats. Angela continues to support each tech's individual interest and support their ongoing education to become senior techs.

Angela's precise focus on Head Start Staff teaching our families so they can keep their children safe falls in line with our beliefs as parents as first teachers as well as encouraging and strengthening and empowering our families to succeed. Angela's emphasis on caring for people and meeting the families where they are when providing services has been a strength builder for all of us techs.

Angela has spent hours researching and helping provide information and education on car seats for children with disabilities and medical challenges. She has help families acquire and work through the process of insurance, doctor notes and installation of these seats.

Angela is always a text or phone call away to provide support for us when needing more information, training and education. Angela works hard to inform our Head Start Car Seat techs of education and training opportunities in the State and lower 48 as well as funding sources (grants) that we can apply for to help cover the cost of trainings.

Angela continues to help us as advocate by including us in events and helps us to build a stronger community resource pool and relationship with in other community agencies through Safe Riders. We have been able to build relationships as car seat techs with our local fire, police and air force and army on post entities that otherwise would have been difficult. We now have direct contact as a program to people on post and base that we can refer families to as well as in the community when easier and closer to families' homes.

Thank you Angela for all of your hard work, love and support that you give to our staff but most importantly to our families. -Angi Thomas

Community Advocate of the Year

Sleeping Lady Mountain Lions



I would like to nominate Sleeping Lady Mountain Lions in Eagle River, Alaska.

For many years the Sleeping Lady Mountain Lions has been a valuable community partner providing support in many ways to our children, families and agency and provide support in many ways including vision screening, book and toy donations, and connecting other community contributors to our agency.

They have been supporting us since 2010. Every year and sometimes twice a year they visit our center to do vision screening for our children. When the screening process detects a possible problem, they refer the child and family to an eye doctor. Vision problems caught and corrected early can make a big difference in the life of the child including avoiding later eye surgery or vision corrections to limit the amount of time a child may need eye glasses.

They have donated books for every child in our center and made cash donations to buy books for each child and members also volunteer at our center and read books to the children. The Sleeping Lady Mountain Lions have helped with our annual center fundraiser for the past two years and attended our annual Valentine's fundraiser this year where they bought a table.

They have helped us do water safety by bringing a remote tug boat and donating water safety coloring books for all children and talked to them about water safety rules. They have helped us find other people to help with other activities like with health screenings, donation of toys and books for Christmas, and a Cookies 4 You fundraiser. They also help us build stronger relationships with the Boys and Girls Club and the Elks club.

The Sleeping Lady Mountain Lions are always there when we need anything for our program. We have really benefited from our collaboration with this organization and hope it continues to grow.

Thank you for your consideration of this worthy organization, we value their support as a strong community advocate for children. -Michelle Schilling



Leadership Award of the Year



Summer Keelan



Please accept this nomination for Summer Reid for the Alaska Head Start Association's Leadership Award. Summer's story is similar to many Head Start staff, she started as a parent and volunteer and then became an employee. From this point, stories can go in many directions. Summer's story is one of growth and excellence. The drive and determination she has demonstrated has made a difference in her own life and made a difference in the lives of those she assists. Everything she does is done with compassion and kindness.

In September of 2008, she was hired as a classroom aide. In 2010, she obtained her CDA and was promoted to a Head Start teacher. In 2013 she transferred to a Home Visitor position in our Early Head Start home-based program. She graduated with a degree in Early Childhood Education in 2014 and is pursuing her Bachelor's degree. These achievements however, are not what are most impressive or inspirational about Summer, It is her authentic ability to connect and the kind, compassionate approach she has to any situation.

In all of her positions and time with us, we have received many positive comments about the work she has done with children and families through the helpful, trusting relationships she developed with each one. However, my experiences with Summer have been through her involvement and informal mentorship with other staff. As a teacher, she supported her Aides in their pursuit of a Child Development (CDA) credential. She mentored new teachers in her center and became a person other staff could rely on for a listening ear, answers to questions, and possible solutions. This continued as Summer moved to other positions. She was a strong team member with our three other Home Visitors. As turnover occurred in this group she again was counted on by new staff to support and assist them in learning and performing their positions.

This year, Summer was promoted to a management position at our Wasilla Center as they started their first year of our duration grant providing more hours and days of service to our 100 children and families at that center. She quickly established strong, trusting relationships with the staff and families. Summer and the Center Coordinator at this center finished a very successful first year of providing increased services and have a positive expectation of continued success.

Recently a need for additional training and resources for our Early Head Start Home Visitors was identified and Summer was a natural choice to consider to provide this assistance. She agreed to take on the task and quickly developed an understanding of what was needed and the trust of the staff to share concerns and ideas to strengthen the home based program. So far she has developed training and resource binder as well as a list of resources that each Home Visitor in different communities can rely on to help families reach their goals.

Summer Reid is very deserving of the Leadership Award. She has demonstrated her leadership skills in every position she has had at CCS Early Learning for the past ten years. It is often debated whether great leaders are developed or born. Summer is a great example of both. She has natural leadership abilities that became clear early on in her career. It has been a delight watching these skills develop through the process of teaching, learning, and observation as new opportunities were sought and achieved by this remarkable woman.

Thank you for your consideration. -Cathy Gruver

Assistant or Deputy Director of the Year

Neva Lancaster



Neva represents everything great about Head Start. She has worked almost every Head Start position and has taken on leadership roles as Family Support, Supervisor and Mentor Coach. She is able to coordinate the demands of systems while maintaining contact and awareness of students and their families' successes.

Neva may be small in stature, yet has a heart that expands with each family and young person she encounters. Her drive for trauma awareness and sensitive support of students provides a guiding principal for all the students in her care. She is willing to pass on ideas and share perspectives that help students feel cared about and staff feel inspired and hopeful even when circumstances are challenging.

Neva's ability to utilize humor and directness while still being sensitive to individuals' sense of well-being is a gift to anyone who knows her. Neva is a fantastic gift to each and every family and staff person fortunate enough to move through her center, or benefit from her experience.

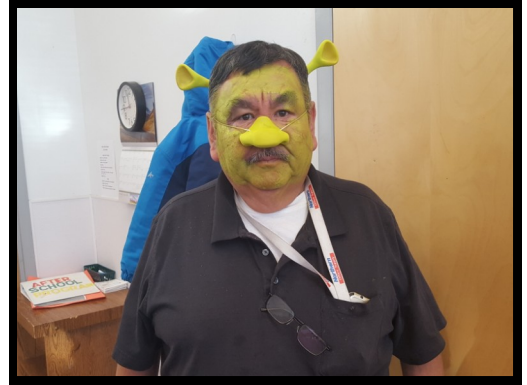
-Kayleen Hetrick

Bus Driver of the Year



Elia Akelkok

We would like to nominate Elia Akelkok, BBNA Head Start, for the bus driver of the year. Elia has been a bus driver for the BBNA Head Start program since 2012, but he is so much more than a bus driver! He has so many qualities that qualify him for this award it is hard to know where to start. First and most important is his love and care for each of the children. His interaction with them is always child friendly and oriented to their interests or immediate needs. He assists the bus aides to ensure that each child gets safely on and off the bus and his ever-present smile and humor help everyone have a great experience.



When the bus pulls up to drop off students, the childcare classes are usually on the playground, and all the kids will line up along the fence shouting, “Hello, Mr Bus Driver”! Even though he doesn’t provide services to these children, he still knows them all by name and goes out of his way to say hello to each one of them.

Most days, Elia goes straight from the bus to the classrooms and assists the teachers in providing guidance especially to children with challenging behavior. He often eats lunch with them and engages in fun and interesting conversation with all. His calm mannerisms and tone of voice help students wind down during transitions or when they’re having emotional outbursts. If he’s not on the bus or in the classroom, he can be found at the front desk answering phones and talking with parents so that the receptionist can take care of other responsibilities.

Elia is a lifetime Dillingham resident so knows most of the children and their families. He knows which parent to call when and at which number, who the back-up adults are for each student, and how to find them if for some reason the parents are not home. He’s willing to make accommodations on the route for special situations like a mom with a new baby, or a parent who suffers with mobility issues and can’t get her pre-schooler to the bus stop.

He also is a supportive team member of our staff and always has an encouraging word and good humor to share even on the most stressful of days! Somehow he just knows when the staff needs a dozen doughnuts!

Because he is one of the first staff members at work in the morning, he has been known to help in the childcare rooms if someone is late, by hanging out with the babies. This, and so many other things that Elia does that are not a part of his job description, make him a most valuable team member. He always has a smile on his face, a kind word for everyone and is always ready to help out in any situation that arises.

Thank you for your consideration of Elia Akelkok for the ASHA bus driver award.

-Anne Shade

Corporate Award



Variety Store LLC

I would like to nominate for the Corporate Award the Variety Store in Port Graham, Alaska.

The Port Graham store learned about the new CACFP meal patterns so they could offer groceries that meet the new pattern so our meals can meet standards and be reimbursable.



They also fly our groceries from Port Graham to Nanwalek biweekly; they absorb the cost of the transportation of the groceries to support the Head Start program, making high quality food available at a lower cost for the health and benefit of the children residing in Nanwalek. Because of their generosity and support I am nominating the Variety Store in Port Graham for the AHSA Corporate Award. -MaryEllen Fritz

Cultural Awareness



Kilann Tanape

Kilann Tanape is the Head Start Lead Teacher in Nanwalek, Alaska. She has worked for Chugachmiut for over 16 years in many capacities, starting as a parent volunteer and working her way up to Lead Teacher. During this time she has worked hard to bring the Sug'stun Native language into the Head Start program; she coordinated with Chugachmiut's admin offices to write letters of support for a grant so that the language could be taught in the school and in the Head Start Center. She coordinates with the school and the Head Start program so all children in Nanwalek have the opportunity to participate in the language lessons.



Additionally, Kilann volunteers to coach the annual Native Youth Olympic (NYO) games each year. Although she is working on completing her Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education while raising her family and working full time, Kilann coaches the youth in Nanwalek to participate in the Native Youth Olympic games in order to preserve the traditional games of the Alaska Native people. Because of Kilann's dedication to preserving her Alaska Native language and traditions, I am nominating her for the Cultural Awareness award. -MaryEllen Fritz

Head Start Director of the Year

Deborah Trowbridge



Deb Trowbridge has shown unselfish commitment and tireless dedication to Kawerak HEAD START/EARY HEAD START, Policy Council and most of all the Children in the Norton Sound Region. From her selfless contributions of time, talent, humor to everyone she meets. -Judith Daniels

Deb has not been afraid to “step up to the plate”, and take on the Directorship of Head Start in Kawerak. She is tenacious, and cares deeply about her program and the future of Head Start, not only for Kawerak, but for Alaska as a whole. She is kind, and helpful to other directors and programs, and is willing to share her expertise. -Jill Ridenour

Deb has been a great addition to the Alaska Head Start Association Directors’ meetings. She has brought years of Head Start experience to the group and is always willing to share ideas and suggestions. I admire Deb’s willingness to ask questions and look for better ways to provide the highest quality of services within her program. Deb’s passion for serving Alaska’s children and families is evident in her dedication, hard work and the support she provides others. -Teresa Smith

Our program is often referred to as Team Strong, as we all work together to make our program be the front line in family growth. There has been many changes within the past few years with directors retiring, and new ones stepping up to take on the challenge. Deb is one of those who prepared herself to take on this leadership. She took classes, asked hard questions, researched, spend long days and nights finding solutions, and most importantly she relies on a team approach. When asking our staff and company co-workers many of the replies were the same. Here is a summary of what they wanted others, and Deb, to know.

Deb is always very thorough in making sure we make the best possible decisions when it comes to children’s safety and education. She is always willing to listen to her coworkers and takes everybody’s opinions into account, and very much welcomes teamwork; a quality that makes a good Director. Deb is known to be reliable and detail oriented. She makes decision based on facts and proven research, and is not swayed by emotions or quick judgments. She is still fairly new to being a supervisor and shares her own learning experiences with her management and supervisor team to provide guidance and always willing to admit she doesn’t have all the answers. She has a strong dedicated team which is proud to have Deb be in the front line always looking for ways to make our program and relationships with our families stronger. Deb is a leader that believes in being fair to all, but knows that fair is not the same for each person. We believe that she does all things in the best interest of our children and families.

Thank you for providing an opportunity for our team to share our thoughts and wish her the best in her continued efforts to make every school year better than the last. -Rebecca Callahan

All 2018 AHSA Award Nominees

Isis Bates	Cheryl Konahok
Linda Duke	Shirley Elachik
Neil Banks	Deuan Thao
Matt Jones	Selina Ellis
Torri Carlson	Jeanny Manilay
Beckey Miller	Markeitah Henry
Megan Faraci	Samuel Knoph
Tammy Rice	Lisa Goneau-Danielson
Dave and Shari Cravy	Monica Angaiak
Don Lambert and Vidal Page	Mary Olson
Neva Lancaster	Elizabeth Harshman
Caroline Wolkoff-Harvey	Tracy Peters
Candace Demas	Irina Blomroz-Choulguine
Rolinda William	Tanya Swenson
Lori Scott	Penny Edin
Gwendolyn Francis	Martha Wagele
Michelle Farrell	Martina Horn
Lori Allen	Nicole Therchik
Jessica C. Loaiza	Rosalie Egrass
Christi Myers	Rebecca Troxel
Sarah Banks	Floyd Vent Jr.
Rebekah Jackson	Davina Sunkel
Tammy Rump	Marcy McGraw
Ethan Petticrew	Allysha Lewis
Sarah Newton	Lakesha Jordon
Jessica Loaiza	Krystal Hensley
Jacelyn Takak	Ryan Hodges
Wilsa Sinnok	