

# **2015 Spirit of Service-Learning Award**

**Co-sponsored by the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of South Florida, The Miami-Dade County Teacher of the Year Coalition, and The Armando Alejandro Memorial Foundation.**

**Purpose: Encourage and celebrate K-12 and college/university educators who integrate service into the curriculum to improve learning, address community needs, and foster civic responsibility and lifelong civic engagement.**

## **Meet the 2015 winners and finalists!**

### **K-12: Co-Winners**

The following winners have not only created programs of extraordinary service, they have also integrated that service into their students' academic studies in such a way as to make student learning both powerful and transformative.

#### **Ketty Quindemil (elementary) Marjory Stoneman Douglas Elementary**

Ms. Quindemil accepted the Green Schools Challenge and created a school-wide program, integrated into the curriculum, to allow Marjory Stoneman Douglas Elementary School students to use the monthly challenges to explore ways that they might help the planet. Involving approximately 1,000 Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, a Green Team of staff, students, volunteers, and parents, Ms. Quindemil orchestrated monthly projects including: Waste Reduction and Recycling, the Trex Plastic Bag Recycling Program, water conservation, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade fashion show created from recycled materials, a garden and tree planting and a visit to Shark Valley. Opening eyes, engaging in reflection, learning about green careers, under Ms. Quindemil's leadership, students turned learning into service and service into learning.

#### **Nuris I Binett (middle school) John I. Smith K-8 - Middle Learning Center**

John I. Smith K-8 Middle Learning Center's Ms. Binett believes that engaging students through service-learning is what she was meant to do. Teaching her students to speak for what they care about through her Family and Consumer Science curriculum, Ms. Binett connects her students to each other, their school and families and the wider community. Whether preparing a family meal, using their bilingual skills to interview elders, traveling to 4-H fairs, signing a pledge to become Green, participating in the monthly Green Schools Challenges, preparing morning announcements, sending emails to teachers with video and

information links to share with students, creating a school newspaper, creating a school garden, or traveling with projects to participate in the Family and Community Leaders of America program, students are taught to find their voice and to use it. And use it they did - winning the Green Schools Challenge 1<sup>st</sup> place for completing a STEM-based curriculum that promotes environmentally sustainable behaviors, including energy and water conservation, waste reduction and recycling.

**Lauren Zelniker (high school)**  
**North Miami Senior High School**

Mrs. Zelniker, as lead teacher and HOSA advisor for the Medical Magnet at North Miami Senior High, has for years made service-learning an extraordinary and integral part of the entire student magnet experience. Using HOSA, a national student organization whose mission is to promote career opportunities in the health care industry and to enhance the delivery of quality health care to all people, Ms. Zelniker enables health science instructors and students active involvement in the HSE-HOSA Partnership. Through this powerful instructional tool, integrated into the HSE and health science related curriculum and classroom, Ms. Zelniker and her students developed three major initiatives this year: one for post traumatic stress syndrome, a second for Down's Syndrome, and a project on teen depression, teen suicide and bullying – which won first place honors in the State of Florida and second in the nation.

**Leopoldo Llinas (private school)**  
**Palmer Trinity School**

Dr. Leopoldo Llinas is Palmer Trinity School's Director of Environmental Stewardship, Director of the Academy of Agents of Change program, recipient of an Innovation in Education Award, and the teacher/creator of a Social Entrepreneurship class which is a model of what service-learning is meant to be. The course of study weaves experiential learning trips, reflection, academic study, and skill training as it invites students to consider how they might change the world. As a result, Dr. Llinas's students have undertaken a number of social initiatives that address needs in the community, including presenting the Sink or Swim Project initiative at the Youth Forum on Climate Change & Water at the University of Miami, participating in and winning a first place in the 2014–2015 Green Schools Challenge (GSC)/Water and Energy Learning and Behavior (WE-LAB) programs, and working with Breakthrough Miami to start a Lacross team for Miami-Dade County middle school students.

## **K-12: Finalists**

### **Ms. Nicole Valiente and Mrs. Sardinas Redland Elementary**

Ms. Nicole Valiente and Mrs. Sardinas worked with their students to begin a plastic bag recycling program at Redland Elementary in which over 60 pounds of plastic bags were collected. In addition to the recycling program they purchased reusable shopping bags using funds they won from the 2014 Fairchild Challenge. The students created informational bookmarks with art work and facts about the importance of recycling that they read and learned about in class. On the Saturday before Earth Day some of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students gathered at Publix in their community to hand out the bookmarks and reusable bags.

### **Hannah Purcell AirBase K-8 Center**

Ms. Purcell led Air Base K-8 Center's Environmental Ambassadors as they created, collaborated, educated and empowered a variety of audiences both at school and in the community about becoming stewards of our earth and having a positive impact at home, in their community and in their world. Named Deering Estate's "Educational Partner of the Year" and participating in events across Miami-Dade including the Recycling Energy Forum, they also earned Fairchild Challenge's Highest honor as a top scoring elementary school and first place overall.

### **Carol Shill Southwood Middle**

Under the leadership of Ms. Shill, Southwood Middle formed a new Green Team made up of more than 50 students. Taking the Green Pledge they set the tone for the school community, completing a school-wide clean-up including tree planting and trimming grass close to drains for ease of rainwater flow. They instituted a powerful recycling campaign and collaborating with students, parents, the science department and the National Junior Honor Society they raised money, re-mulched their outdoor classroom and planted a garden used by the Photography Magnet. They tied for first place in the 2014-2015 We-Lab Competition.

### **Carmen Marroquin Hialeah Gardens High School**

As the leader of the Environmental Club at Hialeah Gardens High School, Ms. Marroquin inspired her students to educate the student body about the importance of preserving the

environment and about the harmful effects of global warming and pollution. They implemented an ink cartridge recycling drive and led a school-wide eco-tour to inform students of the school's efforts to conserve energy. Collaborating with other clubs within the school, the Environmental Club spread awareness and developed environmentally friendly projects including presentations with the YES Program. They also led the school to add a course titled Environmental Management.

## **Higher Education: Co-Winners**

### **Laura Kohn-Wood University of Miami School of Education**

Professor Laura Kohn-Wood has worked with children and families in urban, ethnic minority under-resourced communities over 15 years in academia. Her project involves a partnership with a faith-based grassroots community organization and elementary school in Liberty City which provided grant-funded after school and summer camp academic and personal enrichment programming to 150 children for 3 years. These programs used evidence-based curricula developed by University of Miami faculty, certified teachers and the involvement of several undergraduate and graduate students to assist in direct service implementation and provision. Other service experiences in her academic curriculum include opportunities for graduate students in the Master's Program in Community and Social Change to complete 120 hours of service at a community-based agency while simultaneously taking our Seminar in Social Change ... allowing them to integrate the theories, concepts and methods of Community Psychology they are learning in class to the practical work they do in community based organizations.

### **Quakish Liner Broward College Developmental Education**

Professor Liner introduced service-learning into her Developmental Reading class. The class recognized a need ... students at a neighboring pre-school and elementary school had no books on CDs to take home. They remedied this by implementing a plan to make CDs for the younger students. This plan included viewing "service" videos, listening to "books-on-tape" to obtain hints on pacing etc., choosing books to read, recording them and ultimately delivering their final products to the younger students ... all the while increasing their reading ability and appreciation of service!

**Carola Pedreschi**  
**Miami-Dade College - North Campus**  
**Social Science Department**

Professor Carola Pedreschi has integrated service-learning into her Introduction to Psychology and Human Growth Development courses for the last nine years as a required component in the curriculum. Service-learning projects address students' personal, educational, and career needs; in addition, they meet course competencies including Miami Dade College's Learning Outcomes. Students have the opportunity to correlate various global and social theories and principles such as the Declaration of Human Rights, the Earth Charter, and Ashoka's change-maker principles. Students serve various community organizations ranging from early childhood to hospice. Through the development and implementation of a social entrepreneurship action plan proposal, students go through a holistic and critical reflection correlating classroom content and service-learning experience in fostering an action plan for a new idea or solution to a societal problem, observed or lived, during their civic engagement experience.

**Dr. Mitchell Rosenwald**  
**Barry University**  
**School of Social Work**

Service-Learning and Social Work Practice is a three-credit course in the undergraduate social work program at Barry University. Each student was required to provide at least 45 hours of service that addressed a specific community need or social issue. The community partners for the 2014-2015 academic year were Feeding South Florida, Gratigny Elementary School, and Special Olympics Florida: Miami-Dade County. Students supported efforts to relieve hunger, attended to children with special needs, and assisted with organizing events for persons with intellectual disabilities. Students documented their experiences in journals and reflection papers and made group presentations at an end-of-semester symposium. The three service-learning projects facilitated the practical application of course content while meeting needs in the community.

**Higher Education: Finalists**

**Natalie Butto**  
**Broward College - North Campus**  
**Capstone Class, Supervision and Management/Information**  
**Technology**

Every year, Professor Butto leads Bachelor Degree seeking students in community service projects when they are in the Capstone class. She provides the leadership, guidance, and support for her students to participate in service education projects to engage the students and the community in valuable partnerships. Because the students are pursuing business degrees,

many opportunities to use the skills and knowledge the students have acquired are put to active use in the various service-learning projects.

**Dr. Amy Lund**  
**Miami Dade College - Kendall Campus**  
**Critical Thinking and Ethics**

Over the past nine years, students in Dr. Amy Lund's Critical Thinking and Ethics courses have participated in an ongoing service-learning project. Critical Thinking and Ethics is a philosophy course intended for non-majors who learn to apply their critical thinking skills to evaluate ethical theories and to analyze ethical problems. The project addresses our community's needs on several fronts: students choose to serve at agencies such as the International Rescue Committee, Federation Gardens, Good Hope Equestrian Center, the Humane Society, Chapman Partnership for the Homeless, MDC's Single Stop, local hospitals, and several State Representatives offices, to name a few. Students help new arrivals adjust to life in Miami, help children with special needs, feed homeless residents, and restore and preserve vital natural habitats.

**Dr. Barbra Nightingale**  
**Broward College**  
**Leadership Development and Honors Seminar**

Children's Harbor is a group home which provides temporary shelter to children in emergency situations. It also shelters underage unwed mothers. In the Fall, Dr. Nightingale's Leadership Development class plans and executes the term's events. In the spring term, her Honors Seminar coordinates it; in the summer, it is the project of the Honors Student Committee. What the students do is plan and execute a barbeque with activities at least once a semester, and over the summer. The purpose is twofold: the students get to plan an event, organize activities, and interact with children who need attention from the community, and the children get to interact with young people who are successfully pursuing their college educations. Through sharing of experiences, both students and children learn from each other.

**Dr. David Perdian**  
**Broward College**  
**Chemistry**

The service-learning projects carried out by Broward College students through this program are focused on promoting sustainability and science education outreach efforts on campus and in the greater community. The main objectives of these STEM-inspired service-learning projects have been achieved through a variety of experiences. The projects aimed at increasing sustainability in the community include: community recycling projects, rain barrel water conservation projects, beach cleanup and recycling projects, and participation in the TerraCycle program. The main science education project that service-learning students become involved in is the Science for Kids program. In the Science for Kids program, local

5th grade classes visit Broward College's North Campus to participate in activities for mathematics, earth science, biology, and chemistry. The students involved in the service-learning project assist with the chemistry portion of the program, developing demonstrations and hands-on activities that the 5th grade students participate in during the program.

**Alejandro Salinas**  
**Miami Dade College - InterAmerican Campus**  
**English Composition**

In 2013 Miami Dade College developed a program called Global Sustainability Earth Literacy Studies (GSELS), which allows students to take a series of courses that weave sustainability themes through the core curriculum. At the InterAmerican Campus, Professor Salinas developed the first "GSELS-Focused" English Composition 1 course and linked the curriculum to Art of Cultural Evolution (ACE), a non-profit creating "Miami's first sustainability centers." Students' learning goal in the course is to gain an understanding of how their actions impact the life systems of the planet (which they document through their writing) while participating in ACE's sustainability mission. Through the writing process, students develop "Earth Literacy" in response to the ecological crisis that political and spiritual leaders have been warning us about for more than a century.

**Veronica Tempone**  
**Indian River State College**  
**Spanish**

In an authentic language environment (an "encuentro"), Spanish language students and Spanish-speaking ESL students meet monthly to engage in "dual language" activities that focus on improving language skills and cross-cultural awareness. This approach emphasizes linguistic and cultural competencies and facilitates ESL students' transition into college programs. It also introduces Spanish language students to the community issues and challenges that members of the Spanish-speaking community face – and inspires them to help.