



ARMANDO ALEJANDRE JR.
FEBRUARY 24, 1996
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

2019 Spirit of Service-Learning Awards

October 12, 2019, Miami Springs, FL

*Education is not the filling of a pail,
but the lighting of a fire.*

William Butler Yeats

Recognizing K-12 and college/university educators who are building a new generation of informed and engaged citizens through the use of academic service-learning and civic engagement.

Sponsored by:

- The Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of South Florida
- The Miami-Dade County Teacher of the Year Coalition
- The Armando Alejandro Jr. Memorial Foundation



Miami-Dade County

TEACHER OF THE YEAR COALITION

Higher Education—Winners/Honorees

- Academic Service-Learning

Winners

Melissa Grossman
Thomas Uhle Jr.

Honorees

Miriam Abety
Hoa N. Burrow
Lourdes Espana
Yolanda Nitti
Kay Rubin

K-12—Winners/Honorees

- Academic Service-Learning
- Civic Learning/Civic Engagement

Winners: Service-Learning

Ivette Amador
Mary Cardenty
Cary Cabrera
Laura Sandoval

Winners: Civic Engagement

Luis Luis Fayat
Sharon Wallen

-

Honorees: Service-Learning

Genevieve Cabrera-Theye
Erin Cernuda
Kimberly Clifford
Kelly Jackson
Jesus Llano
Precious Symonette

Honorees: Civic Engagement

Margarida Pinto
Hugo Sierra
Andrea Shepard
Nadim Tabsch
Lucy Marie Trabanco
Molly Winters Diallo

Higher Education **Winners**

Melissa Grossman

Miami Dade College - Wolfson Campus

Fundamentals of Communication students choose a non-profit organization or issue of interest and are grouped together accordingly. The groups have three to five students and complete service-learning hours. Students collect photos and video footage of the issue, the organization and their service-learning experience. After completing their hours, students create a short video to publish on YouTube that explains the issue, what the organization is doing as a solution, and how taking, or not taking action on this issue impacts our future. The video is persuasive and is supplemented with a digital call to action flyer that tells the audience how to get involved. Students also write a 1200-word essay reflecting on their experience and what they have learned about the issue and organization. Their work is showcased in a Gallery of Change event.

Thomas Uhle Jr.

Miami Dade College - Eduardo Padrón Campus

South Florida is vibrant and diverse community. This diversity makes our community beautiful. To celebrate diversity requires a sense of cultural competence. The ability to understand and appreciate different cultures is especially important for future classroom teachers who spend their career teaching children from many different backgrounds. This can be especially poignant when teaching children who live in low socioeconomic areas. The course Introduction to Diversity provides an opportunity to explore the many ways we, as South Floridians, are diverse, and the curriculum has a focus on students who want to become teachers in this diverse metropolis. Students are required to complete 15 service-learning hours in a Title 1 school (serving low-income students) in Miami Dade County Public Schools. Students experience the realities of teaching in South Florida, and have an opportunity to work with small groups, assist in academic programs, observe high quality instruction, and enjoy the magic of watching a young mind learn.

Higher Education **Honorees**

Miriam Abety

Miami Dade College - Eduardo Padrón Campus

Professor Abety requires service-learning in all her courses, including PSY 2012 (Intro to Psych), CLP 2140 (Abnormal Psych), CLP 1006 (Psych of Personal Effectiveness), DEP 2000 (Human Growth and Psychology), and IDH 1002 (Honors College Leadership Seminar 2). She includes content related to global sustainability and earth literacy, uses a project-based learning approach, and guides her students to connect their service to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG). She also helps lead a faculty learning community to raise awareness about important social/civic issues. Last semester faculty and students focused on UNSDG #16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions). This theme was discussed throughout the semester and highlighted for one week on campus that included presentations, student participation, and community speakers. Professor's Abety's students organize and lead myriad events and activities related to their course content and their service and civic learning. For example, last semesters her students built an immigration wall – a multi-faceted interactive experience that included a detention center and analysis of the topic of immigration.

Hoa N. Burrows

Miami Dade College - Kendall Campus

Professor Burrows serves as the coordinator of the MDC Kendall Campus Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. This program offers free federal income tax services to the elderly, students, and low-income taxpayers in the community. Every spring semester, an estimated 30-40 students volunteer more than 1,300 hours for the VITA program. Each student who enrolled in specified tax courses is trained to prepare individual income tax returns, is tested for proficiency, and works as a Certified Tax Preparer for up to 144 hours during the tax season, depending on the course taken. Each volunteer prepares at least 20 tax returns which results in an estimated 700 taxpayers being served annually by Professor Burrows' students.

Lourdes Espana

Miami Dade College - North Campus

Since 2005, Professor Espana improves student success and motivates students to gain leadership skills, by requiring her Honors College Algebra, Honors Pre-calculus and/or Honors Statistics students to complete 15 service-learning hours as peer tutors. Professor Espana's students tutor their peers who struggle with basic math in other MDC North Campus courses (e.g., MGF 1107/1106, Mathematics for Liberal Arts I & II, MAT 0022 Beginning Algebra, or MAT 1033 Intermediate Algebra). Peer tutoring outside the classroom is a very important tool to reinforce the knowledge taught in the class, and permits honors students to apply the concepts they are learning by teaching them to others. In addition, through peer tutoring, Professor Espana's students understand the true meaning of being an "honors" student and gain leadership skills. It is not only about academics, but also about leadership and service to the community by helping those in need. Professor Espana's mantra to her students is "what you know, you show and we all share and grow."

Yolanda Nitti

Miami Dade College - Medical Campus

Professor Nitti includes service-learning in her Community Health Nursing Practicum and Advanced Concepts Practicum. Her goal is to help her students explore the many ways nurses practice "outside the walls" in the community and how this practice influences the health of the community as a whole. Students serve a minimum of 23 hours in the community with agencies that focus on childbearing/childrearing families. Her students learn to manage community health resources to support the delivery of care and provide direct service to marginalized underserved populations. Special emphasis is placed on the understanding of cultural influences on the health practices and beliefs within the family. Professor Nitti believes that a large part of being a registered professional nurse involves the education of the public and the community you serve, and she instills that in her students.

Kay Rubin

Miami Dade College - North Campus

Psychology of Personal Effectiveness is about being proactive and taking initiative to improve one's intrapersonal, interpersonal, and occupational effectiveness. As part of this course students identify a social issue they would like to address and then select and serve a non-profit agency. Students learn about the needs of populations who can benefit from advocacy and how they can use partnerships with non-profit agencies to address social, community, and environmental needs. Students often continue to volunteer after they have completed the course to address social issues they are passionate about. Professor Rubin aims to inspire her students to see themselves as changemakers who are capable of promoting awareness and advocacy to improve the quality of life for others who have been marginalized as well as promote awareness of important socio/political issues.

K-12—Winners/Honorees

Acknowledgement— Dream in Green (www.dreamingreen.org)

Dream in Green is a powerful environmental program that embodies the best of service-learning – high quality curricula; hands on learning and problem solving; and community service. Teachers who accept the “Green Schools Challenge” lead schoolwide Green Teams that engage the entire school in academic learning and a vast array of activities that include tending gardens, recycling, conserving water or electricity, and designing green buildings. Students learn, become engaged and embrace creative ways to care for their environment. Two of our Spirit of Service-Learning award winners and five of our honorees are Dream in Green teachers.

K-12 Academic Service-Learning **Winners**

Ivette Amador

John A Ferguson Senior High School

Ms. Amador and her students operate The Falcon Gift Shop, an entrepreneurial program for adults with special needs ages 18-22. Students learn employability skills as they learn to run the gift shop. In addition, they work closely with the Best Buddies club both within school and the community servicing the autism and intellectual disability community. Students are prepared for real life retail employment as well as helping the special education community through their efforts.

Cary Cabrera

Cypress K-8 Center

Mrs. Cabrera her did an exceptional job leading the implementation of the Green Schools Challenge (GSC). Engaging enthusiastically in all the monthly challenges: recycling, monitoring energy use, conserving water, learning about sustainability - her commitment to the program was unparalleled. Cypress K-8 went from being a new school in the 2015-16 GSC program cycle to the 1st place winner from a group of 40 schools! Ms. Cabrera teaches 5th and 6th grade reading and language arts.

Mary Cardentey

The Growing Place

Mrs. Cardentey’s first year with Dream in Green was an amazing one to watch. Being new to the program she made sure she was aware of her expectations as well as those of her kindergarten students while keeping constant communication with Dream in Green staff. Her little ones tended a garden, recycled, conserved water, walked instead of being driven, and educated grown-ups. She led her team to victory to secure the 1st Place spot in the elementary school category for the 2018-19 Green Schools Challenge.

Laura Sandoval

John A Ferguson Senior High School

Ms. Sandoval leads the Veterinary Assisting Academy which includes a variety of programs that gives students an opportunity to gain hands on experience in the veterinary field. Students staff a grooming and doggy day care program which is open to members of the community and is run as an entrepreneurial program. Students learn employability skills that can be applied in their future careers and provide assistance to animals and owners in need, as when they boarded a homeless student's dog at no cost.

K-12 Academic Service-Learning Honorees

Genevieve Cabrera-Theye

Rockway Middle School

Ms. Cabrera-Theye has been involved in the Green Schools Challenge for multiple years with continued enthusiasm and passion. Her attention to detail, on-time submissions, and enthusiasm for the program shone this year.

Erin Cernuda

Miami Sunset Senior High

Ms. Cernuda has been an exemplary teacher by single-handedly taking on the Green Schools Challenge at her school. Her passion is evident in the number of activities she plays a part in from securing funding for green initiatives at her school to allowing her students to participate in community building activities outside of the classroom. Her dedication to the program and her students resulted in her school winning 1st Place overall in the 2018-19 Green Schools Challenge.

Kimberly Clifford

Edward L. Whigham Elementary

Dr. Clifford's hard work and dedication was recognized when she qualified her school for 2nd Place in the elementary category for the 2018-19 Green Schools Challenge.

Kelly Jackson

Ransom Everglades

This year was the first year Dr. Jackson participated with Dream in Green, but despite that, Ransom Everglades secured 3rd place in the middle school category for the 2018-19 Green Schools Challenge. In addition to taking on our program, Dr. Jackson worked tirelessly to bring more opportunities and outside influence to her students. This prompted her to create and manage several events bringing local businesses, nonprofits and educators to share their knowledge about sustainability to her school.

Jesus Llano

G. Holmes Braddock Senior High

Mr. Llano joined Dream in Green for the first time this year because of his drive to integrate sustainability activities into his curriculum. He wanted to give his students access to opportunities they normally wouldn't have and utilized the Green Schools Challenge to do so.

Precious Symonette

Miami Norland Senior High

Dr. Symonette guides The Writing about Miami Project which combines artistic expression with civic engagement. Students have an opportunity to visit a variety of historical and cultural sites in Miami, learn about the site's significance, write a creative writing piece, and give back to the community through a community activity that shares their creations.

K-12 Civic Engagement Winners

Luis Luis Fayat

Gulliver Schools

Mr. Fayat has been a true inspiration, engaging more than 190 high school student volunteers to build homes in Latin American communities with TECHO – an international non-profit fighting poverty across Latin America. During winter and spring breaks from school he and his students have taken part in eight building trips. In addition, he is a liaison between TECHO, the school administrators, and in most cases the students and their parents, gracefully balancing many responsibilities for the sake of serving others. Most importantly he motivates his students to do good, and to truly find themselves in the process.

Sharon Wallen

Spanish Lake Elementary

Ms. Wallen has inspired her students to be concerned for animal welfare. Under her leadership, her students participated in a blanket drive for animals, contributed bookmarks and goodie bags, and researched pet euthanasia. They published a book, TLC Tender Loving Care, based on their research and lent their voice to Help Overcome Pet Euthanasia (H.O.P.E.) They participated in the 24th Annual H.O.P.E. contest and were 1st place winners in the elementary division.

K-12 Civic Engagement Honorees

Margarita Pinto

Miami Beach Senior High

Ms. Pinto leads the Shape Club, an afterschool club of ~50 students. It was introduced as an initiative of the Mark J. Gordon Foundation and empowers thousands of students to make a true difference in their community. As a member of SHAPE, students take part in the operation of a simulated charitable foundation that grants real money to the school and to a nonprofit organization in the community. Students decide how to successfully run the club and decide where the money is donated.

Andrea Shepard

North Miami Senior High

Ms. Shepard motivates students in her community service class to revitalize and enhance the environment around their school. Their projects include landscaping, maintaining a vegetable garden and the creation of the Reading Zone, a place where students can sit in a plant-filled environment while enjoying their favorite hobby. Students plant “Seeds of Change” in the hope that by providing this space, non-readers will be inspired to join the ranks of their peers who have discovered the joy of reading.

Hugo Sierra

John A Ferguson Senior High School

Mr. Sierra leads the school’s Psychology Honor Society. The Society informs their student body about the importance of mental health. They have partnered with the Sandy Hook Promise to promote yearly events. Some of the topics that they have hosted included week-long events focused on combating social isolation and self-harm and providing stress relief.

Nadim Tabsch

John I. Smith K-8 Center

Mr. Tabsch is the inspiration for the Speech and Debate Elective and after school club, a dynamic experience that allows students to improve their public speaking, writing and communication skills. Students use their skills to explore past and current topics that have an impact on society. They use their voice in order to demonstrate their perspective and to participate in three main competitions: The Big Question Debate, a nationally recognized grant program and debate competition; the JIS speech & debate all year competition; and the Theodore Gibson Oratorical Competition presented by Miami Dade College in collaboration with MDCPS.

Lucy-Marie Trabanco

Ronald W. Reagan Senior High School

Ms. Trabanco leads the school's SWAT Club which hold presentations within their school, community middle schools, and city parks. With 60+ members in the club, they educate students and parents alike about the dangers that come with using e-cigarette's and nicotine addiction. They have included members in their club who are part of their special needs program called "STEPS." Together they are fighting against big tobacco and the horrible e-cigarette epidemic. SWAT students are given the tools and real-life experience to empower them and show them that they can make a difference in our world.

Molly Winters Diallo

Alonzo and Tracy Mournig Senior High

Ms. Diallo created Branch Out, an afterschool club that meets twice monthly and sponsored activities to support students in living with diversity and connecting with students who may be different from themselves. Sponsored by the Bezos foundation, the student learned to form an inclusive, caring community.

