Educational Assistants Association

The Front Line

YEAR END EDITION 2024

Record Number of Student and Member Awards Nominations Received this Year:

The EAA Grade 6 Student Award had seven nominations in total which is incredible! The winner of the EAA Grade 6 Student award is Sienna from John Darling PS (pictured with Betty Spurling who nominated her). "*Sienna worked very hard to close the gaps in her Math learning. She had an IEP for Math for several years and due to her determination and perseverance she was able to work at grade level this year. She responds well to learning opportunities and teacher support, continues to have a modified IEP in Language but uses digital tools to independently complete assigned tasks and meet expectations. Sienna has shown incredible resilience since the loss of her Father several years ago. She is cooperative, kind, and easy to get along with. Sienna showed generosity by purchasing a book for another student at our school book fair. She befriends many of her peers including those who may struggle to get along with others. She demonstrates responsibility by upholding her commitment as a library helper. She also initiated an 'Eco Club' in her peer group with a focus on preserving nature. Outside of school, She participates in a cooking class where she is learning to make simple recipes.*" Sienna was so thrilled, she couldn't wait for the day to end so she could go home and tell her Mom.



For our Award recognising a Grade 8 student with an IEP we received a total of 3 very detailed nominations, which made it most difficult to choose a winner. The winner of the EAA Grade 8 Student Award is Lexie of Cedar Creek PS, nominated by Suzie Fita. "*With modification in Language, Lexie is able to be successful and continues to meet expectations within the grade 8 curriculum. She has overcome challenges physically due to her size to include herself equally with other peers, she continues to be respectful and empathetic to others in need. Lexie enjoys community involvement in clubs (Brownies) and sports (ice skating, soccer). She is active in her school community as a part of the Student Activity Council, Cultural Appreciation Club, Reading Buddies, Kindergarten Helper, Assisting with Nutrition Break in a grade 4 class, Art Club, Music Practice Club, and attended the Waterloo Region GSA conference. (in support of the 2SLGBTQ+ community).*" Lexie's nomination also included nine letters of recommendation from other members of the school community that beautifully highlighted Lexie's resilience, determination, remarkable spirit, unwavering courage, optimism, and how a person born with Dwarfism has the power to unleash the boundless potential that resides within each and every one of us.



winner for the Student Achievement Award is



Kari of Preston High School nominated by Cyndi Rideout; "*Kari was subjected to cruel bullying all throughout her school years. She wrote a dynamic poem about it in drama class and shared it with our incoming grade 8's. She has given up many of her lunches to sit with students who are new to our school to ensure that no one felt alone. This is a small example of the many kind things that I have witnessed Kari doing to make someone else's life better. Kari has had to overcome several medical issues which meant making up for missed class time. Not an easy feat considering her learning challenges. Yet she did so without complaining, in 4 years, with a smile. Kari plans to attend Conestoga College for the Educational Assistant Program. Kari is a special human being who deserves to be recognized*". The nomination was strongly endorsed by two letters of recommendation. One from her Tech Teacher who detailed her commitment, dedication and perseverance through challenging projects such as a custom headboard she designed and built. The second letter came from her co-op placement Kindergarten Teacher who raved about how well

students with the ability to guide the sessions so skillfully on her own.



The Member Memorial Award that recognises an ACE secondary graduating Student received 5 nominations. The winner of the Member Memorial Award, nominated by Pamela Geringer of Waterloo Collegiate Institute is Tristan. "*Tristan has been here at WCI for his full seven years of high school. Always a friendly, polite and enthusiastic student, he has grown and matured more each year. Being an ACE student, our academic focus has always been on preparing the students for the workplace. Teaching them about work ethic, the importance of being reliable and taking initiative. He has always shown a great interest in developing these skills. He has had eight separate work placements over the years, starting out with group placements where he showed great leadership. Tristan's independent placements were in food services, portioning and weighing the foods, preparing items for service etc. He has had two years working in grocery*

required tasks well and with enthusiasm, pride in his work, great energy and punctuality. Tristan is also always willing to go with staff for groceries for the class, as a leader on GRT transit, to participate in any school events such as helping out with gardening or recycling for the school. The biggest academic achievement came this spring when Tristan applied to the CICE program at Conestoga College and after a couple of intense interviews, he was accepted. Come September, he will be a Conestoga College student and he is already wearing the "swag". This is not an easy accomplishment and the competition is fierce. Tristan has held paid employment at Fish Fry and Costco. He works out at a gym and participates in hobbies. He establishes friendships easily and is known for his kindness, generosity, and trustworthiness. We are so very proud of him and know that he will continue to strive to achieve all that he can from every opportunity."

Now for the EAA Member Appreciation Awards; last year the Awards Committee decided that it was important to honour a member in each job title of EA and CYW so we have added a second award this year. The EA Appreciation Award had eight nominations, the winner, nominated by Susan Flynn of Galt Collegiate Institute, is Tracey Sullivan. "*Tracey is exceptional and completely invaluable to our school community. She demonstrates kindness, flexibility and an unwavering commitment to our staff and students. Tracey forms incredible relationships with staff and students; she coaches, runs clubs and teams and was instrumental in the successful planning, preparation and execution of our school's drama production. Because of her commitment to our school and community,*



our students and this is one of the many reasons she is responsible for the success and improvement of many of our most vulnerable learners. Tracey is also an incredible resource to staff. She works in classrooms and staff know they can ask her questions about how to best support the learning efforts of our students; they easily rely on her wisdom. I have also witnessed Tracey mentoring new EAs in our building - what a gift it is to learn from her. Tracey is an expert educator and I am a better educator because of her influence over the many years I have had the privilege of working with her".



The CYW Appreciation Award had three nominations. The winner is Sabrena Ball, nominated by Nathalie Koebal from Moffat Creek. Sabrena's nomination came with three awe-inspiring letters of recommendation attesting to her remarkable impact within the school community and beyond. The letters describe in great detail her innate ability to connect with young individuals, empowering them to be their authentic selves. One spoke to how her professionalism is exemplified by her approach to listening and observing before taking action. How her exceptional contributions, tireless dedication and engagement with culturally relevant organizations has enriched the students' experiences and facilitated holistic development. It is clear that Sabrena's dedication to fostering inclusivity is commendable. That her passion for supporting students and families, coupled with her extensive experience in social services makes her a valuable asset to the school community. Her unwavering commitment to meeting the diverse needs of students and fostering inclusivity is truly praiseworthy and deserving of recognition.

That's a wrap on awards this year. On behalf of the committee and myself I would like to give a special thanks to everyone who took the time to nominate someone or recommend a nomination. If anyone is interested in being on the Awards committee next year please reach out to me or the office. If you would like to read the details of all of the nominations click on the button below.

Nominees



In a recent press conference held in May, the EAA Executive attended an event that brought to light the alarming prevalence of violence in schools. The conference featured a video showcasing harrowing accounts from school staff who witness acts of violence on a regular basis. During the event, President Colleen Dietrich Sisson delivered a poignant speech emphasizing the urgent need to address the issue of violence in schools. Members of Parliament from Kitchener and Waterloo were present, underscoring the gravity of the situation and the importance of taking action. A startling article published by the Kitchener Record shed light on the distressing realities faced by students and staff in schools. The message conveyed by President Sisson and echoed by the attending MPs was clear: something must be done to ensure that students and staff are provided with a safe and secure environment in which to learn and work. It is evident that the issue of violence in schools is a pressing concern that demands immediate attention. Every individual within a school community deserves to feel safe and protected, and it is imperative that steps are taken to address this issue effectively. While efforts to raise awareness and advocate for change represent a positive step in the right direction, it is crucial to recognize that there is nothing good about be paramount, and collective action must be taken to create a culture of respect, safety, and support within educational settings.

(click the photo to be directed to the Kitchener Record Article)

Food4Kids Waterloo Region was the recipient of our yearly EAA charity donation:



Food4Kids provides nutritious food to over 3000 children in our community and our monetary donation of $500 will support a child for 5 months! They are extremely grateful for the EAA support.

Thanks for reading, enjoy your summer!
Chantelle Zurbrigg, EAA Secretary

Dear EAA members,
As the school year comes to a close, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for your hard work and dedication. You have made a tremendous difference in the lives of the students you serve. It has been my honour to represent and support such a passionate group of educators. Have a safe and happy summer!
~Lisa Weiler Haskins, Vice President

We made it! Another school year is complete. Thank you to all our members who have reached out for information, support and to share ideas. I am grateful for how much I have learned about the vast skills and profiles of our EAs and CYWs. What you do everyday is truly incredible. I look forward to continuing to advocate for what you need to keep doing amazing work in our schools. Have a safe and restful summer and we will see you in September.
~Laura Parker, CYW Representative

It has been a very busy year when it comes to the Health & Safety part of our job, we hit a new milestone- over 2000 incidents reported. While this number is very high and we hope to get it lowered, I am very glad that so many of you are filling out reports. I hope you all have a wonderful, relaxing, SAFE summer! I will see you all again in September.
~Lynn Wilson, Health & Safety Officer

My first year as the EA Rep has proven to be extremely informative. I have learned lots of valuable information to help our members and I thankful for the patience of our members who give me the time to seek out answers during their own stressful moments. I also want to thank all of our KEY's and Constitution Committee Volunteers who have given a lot of their personal time to help make our union stronger. Have a great relaxing and recharging summer!
~Chris Letizi, EA Representative

Hello Educational Assistants and Child Youth Workers! I want to wish you a very happy and safe summer. You are all amazing and hard working! I hope you all enjoy many opportunities to rest and relax.
See you in the fall!
~Lisa Cornish, Treasurer

I hope that each of you has a restful and enjoyable summer break. It's time to take pause, nurture yourself, escape to the beach, curl up with a book.....or whatever speaks to you.
Wishing you safe travels,
~Colleen Dietrich Sisson, President

Dates to Remember:

July 15 - August 16 2024 - *EAA Office Closed*
September 3, 2024 - *First day of school for Perm and Term Staff*
October 21, 2024 - *EAA Fall General Meeting*
November 1, 2024 - *EAA PD Day at Bingeman Park*
January 19, 2025 - *EA/CYW Appreciation Day*

(Click here to access the full 2024/25 School Year Calendar)

*Copyright © *2024* *Educational Assistants Association* All rights reserved.*
www.wrdsbeaa.com

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.