

Amie Thompson, Rhianna Jenkins, Katie McCluey, Julie Pachek, and Shannon Feters, East Middle School PTA Members were recommended for Good Apple Awards by Leesa Halcro, Social Studies Teacher, East Middle School because of the following: The PTA has gone above and beyond by agreeing to take on the student yearbook for the 2016-2017 school year. The members of the East Middle School PTA have been integral to the completion of the yearbook. Specifically, Amie has taken personal time and time away from her job to communicate with staff about students photos and came in to take pictures at several of our school events. The entire committee has worked together to name each student appropriately and correctly in the yearbook and produce a quality project. If the East Middle School PTA had not agreed to produce the yearbook, our students would not have a yearbook this year. The East Middle PTA is deserving of a Good Apple Award because they look out for teachers and kids and make East Middle School a better place to learn and work.

Daneen Pate, Administrative Assistant, District Offices, was recommended for Good Apple Award by Rachelle Broughton, Administrative Assistant, because of the following: Can you spell Good Apple? I know Daneen Pate can, however, she has never been nominated. I would like to nominate Daneen for a Good Apple recognition for all the hard work she puts into organizing and managing the annual Cascade County Spelling Bee. Daneen has coordinated the Spelling Bee for the past 7 years. All fifteen elementary schools, two middle schools, in addition to the parochial and rural schools within Cascade County participate in the Bee. This is a time consuming, detailed process and Daneen manages it flawlessly. Kudos to Daneen and all her diligent work she puts into making the Cascade County Spelling Bee a successful event.

Kirsten Conrad, Special Education Teacher, Loy Elementary, was recommended for Good Apple Award by Nadine Singels, Para Educator, Loy Elementary because of the following: Ms. Conrad is an exceptional and dedicated teacher. She works tirelessly to provide an individualized education to each of her students and well as other students in our building. She continues to take classes, research and build her skills and knowledge to meet the ever changing needs of her students. She works many extra hours and uses a lot of her money to provide for the class. Ms. Conrad also works to provide education and information for the para-educators in her room to help them do their best with the students. With a classroom for students K-4, the amount of preparation to meet the needs of such a variety of learning levels is overwhelming. She is organized. When substitutes come into our room in any position, she has lesson plans that provide detailed information for that guest to have a successful experience. She also serves on numerous committees for the district special education department to help the department succeed. Ms. Conrad also helps coach the high school swim teams and is dedicated to their success.

Ben Jaques, 3rd Grade Teacher, Meadowlark, was recommended for Good Apple Award by Patrick Ryan, Vocal Music Teacher, Great Falls High because of the following: Ten years ago, I became a parent. My perceptions of teaching were forever altered on that day! I know my teaching has radically changed since I became a parent. Then, my children started going to school. My perceptions of education changed yet again, and I am now thoroughly convinced that primary grade teachers are not only superheroes with magical powers, but that they may be the most important people in our entire country. My children's entire education – their perception of school and learning, their self-esteem, perhaps their entire future – rests on the quality of their first few teachers. My son has been blessed with a great school community at Meadowlark Elementary, and I am grateful to all his teachers in his first four years of schooling. Kian is introverted and shy, but all his teachers and the community at Meadowlark have helped make him feel welcome and have helped him open up and be comfortable. However, by the end of last year, he was pretty down about school. This year, Mr. Ben Jaques has utterly transformed my child's education. Kian is now an eager learner who loves going to school, and adores his third grade teacher, Mr. Ben Jaques. The amount of learning Kian comes home with is astounding – almost every evening my son surprises me with a new concept, vocabulary word, way to solve a math problem or a way of looking at the world around him.

Every time Ben sees my son, he has a kind word and easy demeanor that communicates unconditional care. I cannot adequately express my gratitude to Mr. Jaques for the care and teaching he gives my son (and all of his other students!) every day. Ben is a treasure for our town, our district, his school, and most especially for his students. Thank you, Mr. Jaques!

Stephanie Frank, 1st Grade Teacher, Kristal Thunstrom, 1st Grade Teacher, and Nikki Ritland, Counselor, all from Riverview Elementary, were recommended for Good Apple Awards by Meghan Brenna, 2nd Grade Teacher, Riverview Elementary because of the following: I am writing to nominate a few GREAT teachers whose impact sends ripples to every corner of our school. My colleagues Stephanie Frank, Kristal Thunstrom, and Nikki Ritland have touched many students and teachers in countless ways. For one, these three individuals are exceptional listeners and are aware of not only student needs but colleagues as well. When I find myself struggling as a teacher, I know I can always go to these three with doors wide open. They provide me with great feedback and keep my professional growth at its best. When observing I have found students look relaxed, invited, and encouraged to learn. You can definitely see that students feel comfortable asking for help when needed. Second, it's very typical to see these women in their room at lunch, recesses, or after school. I usually find them grading papers, preparing for a lesson, or working with that one child who needs the extra help. They are truly committed to excellence. I admire their strong work ethic and personal integrity. Kristal, Stephanie, and Nikki definitely exemplify what is right with education today. I could write on and on about the passion and dedication with which these THREE FABULOUS TEACHERS- collaborate with peers, and teach students to the best of their ability. They make the world a better place not only just for students, but coworkers as well. These three women are some of the finest teachers I've worked with in my teaching career.

Jodi Koterba, Industrial Technology Teacher, C. M. Russell High School, was recommended for a Good Apple Award by Kathleen Nelson, Secondary Teacher on Special Assignment. District Offices because of the following: my daughter, Hayley has had the opportunity to take classes from Ms. Koterba over the last three years. Mrs. K. has encouraged and supported my daughter in exploring career, leadership and volunteer opportunities. These experiences have helped Hayley become a well-rounded and involved student at the high school level. Mrs. K continually encouraged and challenges Hayley to compete in FFA events at both the state and national levels. Mrs. K. goes above and beyond the duties of a high school teacher. She makes an all-in commitment to mentor and support her students academically and emotionally. She is caring & patient, enthusiastic about teaching and her curriculum, and these are the reasons her students love and respect her. As a parent and educator, I have the utmost respect for Jodi because she has an innate ability to help students find the best in themselves and provides a positive environment and support system that allows students to thrive.