

## Heart at Work Employee of the Month

Keller ISD's Heart at Work Employee of the Month for September 2026 is Patsi Cassidy, a sixth-grade math teacher at Trinity Meadows Intermediate School. Patsi was nominated by TMIS Principal Sydney Bramer, who shared the following:

*During one of our busiest days of PD week, the administrative team was tied up in meetings all day and barely had a chance to step away. Seeing that everyone was hungry and had no time to leave for lunch, Patsi jumped in without hesitation and offered to pick up lunch for the entire team. What may seem like a small gesture made a huge difference. Patsi saw a need and stepped up to take care of others, allowing us to focus on the work at hand while making sure we were taken care of. Thank you, Patsi, for always being willing to go above and beyond, for your servant leadership, and for showing what it truly means to have a Heart at Work.*

## Star Educator Award Recognition

Andrea Haefeli, a Graphic Design teacher at the Keller Center for Advanced Learning, has been selected as Keller ISD's first Star Educator Award recipient for the 2026-27 school year. She was nominated by a former student Mackenzi Christenson, who credits Haefeli's instruction with sparking a lasting interest in marketing and helping shape a successful career in the technology industry. Christenson also highlighted the strength of Haefeli's program, noting that her students leave school prepared to make meaningful contributions in professional settings. The nomination celebrates Haefeli's ability to inspire students, cultivate their talents and equip them with real-world skills that carry far beyond the classroom.

## National Math Stars Achievement

Eleven Keller ISD elementary students were selected as 2026 National Math Stars finalists, earning recognition among more than 8,000 applicants nationwide. Last month, five of those finalists advanced to the next stage and were named 2026 National Math Stars, joining a select group of 600 students nationwide recognized for their exceptional mathematical ability.

Finalists undergo a multi-stage evaluation of mathematical aptitude, with fewer than 7% of applicants ultimately earning the distinction of being named a National Math Star.

The National Math Stars Program is a 10-year, fully funded initiative designed to identify and support exceptional young math scholars from second grade through high school. Students in the program receive access to several resources and opportunities – including advanced math and STEM enrichment, summer camps, competitions, family advising, financial aid, and a nationwide network of mentors and peers.

### Finalists:

Alicea Fitzgerald, Shady Grove Elementary  
Emily Cordell, Woodland Springs Elementary  
Joaquin Prieto, Bette Perot Elementary  
Jeremy Gyimah, Shady Grove Elementary  
Neel Kashuvajjala, Ridgeview Elementary  
Ameen Zeki, Independence Elementary

### National Math Stars:

En Shin Yeh, Woodland Springs Elementary  
Neel Deepak, Willis Lane Elementary  
Joshua Vu, Heritage Elementary  
Sia Sultan, Willis Lane Elementary  
Elise Lockhart, Bluebonnet Elementary

## **HOSA International Competition Achievement**

Four students from Keller Collegiate Academy brought home the world championship title in the HOSA Medical Innovations Contest at the 49th Annual HOSA International Leadership Conference, held June 17-20 in Indianapolis. Competing against more than 100 teams from around the world, the students developed an innovative solution to address a critical need in healthcare. Their patent-pending invention is an AI-powered sterile field monitoring system designed to detect contamination risks in real time in operating room environments, helping advance patient safety and improve healthcare outcomes.

The victory marks a historic first for Keller Collegiate Academy, as it is the first KCA team to advance to the international competition and earn a first-place finish. The achievement reflects the students' creativity, perseverance, leadership, and commitment to service.

The KCA Medical Innovations team includes seniors Suhas Chinta, Layal Barbar, and Raniel Tshimbalanga, as well as 2026 graduate Sanjit Vadlapudi. They are led by KCAL Health Science teacher Alyson Morgan.