Heart at Work Employee of the Month

Keller ISD's Heart at Work Employee of the Month for November 2026 is Jennifer Martinez, a diagnostician at Parkwood Hill Intermediate School. Jennifer received three nominations – one from her principal and two from her teammates – and is being recognized for her compassion, professionalism, and unwavering dedication to students, families, and staff.

> *"As a positive leader and trusted mentor, Jennifer leads with patience, grace, and understanding, offering guidance and encouragement to her colleagues. Her expertise, attention to detail, commitment to continuous growth, and willingness to collaborate and problem-solve reflect her passion for serving students and empowering teachers. Her caring nature and dedication make her an invaluable asset to PHIS and the district. Jennifer truly exemplifies 'Heart at Work' through the meaningful and lasting impact she makes on her campus community"*

Star Educator Award Recognition

Olivia Lane, head choir director at Keller Middle School, has been selected as Keller ISD's next Star Educator Award recipient for the 2026-27 school year. She was nominated by KISD Assistant Director of Fine Arts Stephen Hawthorne-Hill, who shared:

> *"Olivia is an outstanding educator and director who exemplifies excellence, dedication, and a genuine passion for her students. She cares deeply about developing not only exceptional musicians but also confident, well-rounded singers who take pride in their craft. Recently, Olivia surpassed her own record for All-Region Choir selections, with an incredible 73 students earning a place in the choir, a clear testament to her expertise, high expectations, and unwavering commitment to student success. Additionally, her Bella Voce Choir was selected as a national winner through the Foundation for Music Education's Mark of Excellence, an extraordinary accomplishment that reflects the consistent quality and excellence of her program. Olivia and the KMS Choirs consistently earn UIL Sweepstakes awards, and she serves as a positive, collaborative leader among choral directors throughout the district and beyond. Beyond her impressive musical achievements, Olivia makes a lasting impact on the lives of her students, earning the admiration and appreciation of students and families alike through her dedication, encouragement, and investment in their growth. Her commitment to excellence, ability to inspire young musicians, and positive influence on her school and community make her exceptionally deserving of the Star Educator Award."*

KHS Cross Country State Achievement

Keller High School cross country athletes competed in the 6A UIL State Cross Country Meet November 6 at Old Settlers Park in Round Rock. The teams advanced to State after impressive performances at the UIL Region 1 Cross Country Meet on October 26 in Lubbock, where the girls finished second and the boys placed third. These athletes are coached by Justin Gretzinger, Sammy Diehl, and Thane Garnett.

KHS Girls Team: Sarah Darnell, Julia Graves, Emma Gibson, Katherine Wander, Quinn Boneau, Yumi DeSaram, and Payton Ringleb

KHS Boys Team: Boston Bowcutt, Austin Boto, William Washington, Braden Anderson, Cade Swan, Heath Shiflett, and Noah Hudson

**State results unknown at time of submission*