

## **November Heart at Work Winner**

Keller ISD's Heart at Work Employee of the Month for November 2024 is **Michelle Hackleman, a 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher at Shady Grove Elementary School**. Michelle was nominated by Bear Creek Intermediate School Psychologist, Jennifer Wright, who shared the following:

*"I was observing at recess today and saw Mrs. Hackleman interact with one of my students and it was awesome! This student was having a hard time and was sitting next to Mrs. Hackleman on the bench. She listened to the student explain why she was unhappy and then smiled and encouraged her to "Shake it off like Taylor Swift!" After a few seconds, the student commented that she does like Taylor Swift and when another student approached her, our friend told the other student, "I'm just gonna shake it off! Like Taylor Swift!" They both ran off smiling! This may seem minor, but it is HUGE for our friends that need a little extra peer and social support. How Mrs. Hackleman responded could have either made no difference or prolonged/agitated the situation. Instead, her response resulted in the student being able to turn it around very quickly, very naturally, and rejoin recess with her peers. Those little prompts/encouragements make ALL the difference!"*

## **Staff Recognitions presented by KISD Human Resources**

The Substitute Spotlight program acknowledges substitute teachers who are dedicated, dependable, and provide a positive educational experience for KISD students. The KISD Human Resources Department honors one to two substitutes each week for the Spotlight, and once a month, a winner is drawn from those honorees. **This month's Substitute Spotlight is presented to Cassie Will.**

## **Keller ISD Star Educator Award Winner**

The Star Educator Award is being presented to **Trinity Meadows Intermediate 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Science & Social Studies Teacher Kristie Jones**. She was nominated by Carolyn Dougherty, a math teacher at Trinity Springs Middle, who said:

*"Kristie leads with heart and a bit of craziness. She promotes a spirit of family and fun on the TMI campus. Not only can she be seen dressed as a Unicorn, she also creatively communicates with families both for her classes and campus-wide, prepares hands-on labs and activities to reinforce the science concepts, and she consistently promotes and encourages individual student growth."*

## **Lone Star ES Unified Champion School National Banner Renewal**

In 2021, Lone Star Elementary School became the first elementary school in the state of Texas to earn Unified Champion School's national banner recognition through Special Olympics Texas for its efforts to provide inclusive sports and activities for students with and without intellectual disabilities. To earn this recognition, Lone Star had to meet 10 national standards of excellence in the areas of inclusion, advocacy, and respect. These standards were developed by a national panel of leaders from Special Olympics and the education community. Every three years, Unified Champion Schools must reapply to retain their national banner recognition status, and Lone Star has once again successfully completed the criteria to remain a national banner recognition school. Congratulations to Principal Steve Hurst, Lone Star UCS Advisor Kelly McCormack, and all of the teachers, staff, students, and families of Lone Star Elementary for once again earning this exclusive and prestigious honor.

### **Thermo Fisher Scientific Junior Innovators Challenge Finalist Recognition**

Indian Springs Middle School seventh grader Brody Jaworski was named a Finalist in the 2024 Thermo Fisher Scientific Junior Innovators Challenge, a program in partnership with the Society for Science, for his project showcase entitled, “Chemically Transforming Dead Leaves into Adhesives.” The Thermo Fisher Scientific Junior Innovators Challenge is the nation’s premier middle school science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) competition, and received over 1,800 applications this year. Brody was one of 30 Finalists selected by a nationwide panel of scientists, engineers, and educators who were then invited to Washington D.C. October 25-30 to participate in Thermo Fisher JIC Finals Week. There, a panel of judges evaluated the scientific research of its Finalists along with their communication, creativity, and collaboration skills during team challenges. As a Finalist, Brody also received a \$500 cash award, and Indian Springs MS was granted \$1,000 for campus STEM initiatives.

### **Cross Country State Achievements for KHS and TCHS**

Three Keller High School runners and one Timber Creek High School runner qualified for the Class 6A State Cross Country Championship Meet after their performances at the Region 1-6A Championships. Keller High’s Clare Boneau (also District 4-6A Individual Champion) and Timber Creek's Megan Calhoun finished 11th and 15th, respectively, to both qualify for the Class 6A State Championship, while Keller High's Anthony Abeyta and Boston Bowcutt finished 15th and 16th, respectively, to also earn individual berths to the State Meet. At the State Championship Meet held on November 1 in Round Rock, these outstanding athletes competed against Class 6A's best and placed as follows: Clare Boneau (13<sup>th</sup>), Megan Calhoun (41<sup>st</sup>), Anthony Abeta (89<sup>th</sup>), and Boston Bowcutt (24<sup>th</sup>). These students are coached by Justin Gretzinger, Samantha Roth, and Thane Garnett for Keller High School, and Tony Doran, Timothy Thomas, and Joseph Schwochert for Timber Creek High School.