

Honorees

Nominee: Ms. Clare Persson

Nominated by: Alan Robichaud

Categories: Parenting, Communication, Volunteering, Community Collaboration, Participation in Decision-Making

Write-up: Ms. Clare Persson exudes parent/educational leadership in so many ways. During the designated school year, she served as the Laconia Middle School/PTO President after years of serving as a member of the elementary school PTO. Under her leadership, the PTO extended its role and influence as a positive influence at LMS. New initiatives such as the semi-formal dance, expansion of substance abuse awareness and continuation of the Texting and Technology Awareness presentation are only a few of her achievements. Involved in *Better Together*, a grassroots civic engagement initiative, and the Full-Service Community school initiative, Clare assures parent representation in school/community endeavors. Through her involvement, Ms. Persson has introduced the community to her two young daughters who themselves are aspiring leaders not only in their school but in the community well. Ms. Persson is also part of planning a two-day event that will bring representatives of the Southern Poverty Law Center to our community in October to discuss the theme of *From Tolerance to Inclusion* as a way to reinforce educational leadership on anti-bullying and personal respect. She is also active in the committee planning a Laconia Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition. In quoting Jim McCollum, Principal of the Laconia Middle School, "Clare is an active, passionate parent and community member who understands the importance of participating in the change that one wants to see. Some folks talk a good game; Ms. Persson shows up and dives in to ensure that positive change occurs!"

Nominee: Scott Jaquith

Nominated by: Ciza Simon, Gahungu Simon, Bukuru, Matthias

Categories: Communication, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Community Collaboration, Participation in Decision-Making

Write-up: We would like to nominate Mr. Scott Jaquith for the Parent Involvement award for the work he has done for our families since we came to Nashua in 2007. It wasn't easy growing up in a refugee camp in Africa. As children, the war in my county killed and destroyed tens of thousands of lives and other living things. Many people didn't get a chance to receive an education because of their poverty. We had limited food, shelter and clothing. In 2007, something amazing happened. My family and I were invited to come to America. We resettled in Nashua NH which is where we met Mr. Jaquith. He has become an amazing advocate for all the Burundi families in Nashua. He has accompanied us on college visits. He has met us at the emergency room at 2 in the morning. He advocated for us with local welfare agencies in Nashua and made sure we had adequate shelter and food to eat. He has always been there when we needed help. He always encouraged us to do our best. Some of us call him teacher and others a mentor but to us he is our "brother from God". In Africa there is a saying that we live by,

“Unwana si umwe!” This means that “It takes a whole village to raise a child”. Mr. Jaquith doesn’t pretend to be our father but he loves all of us like we are his own children. Mr. Jaquith has made it possible for all three of us to go to college. Without his support, our options would be limited. Even after we leave we are confident that Mr. Jaquith will continue to support our families. He is more deserving of this award than anyone else we know.

Nominee: Kathleen Bunnell

Nominated by: Jamie Cera

Categories: Volunteering

Write-up: Mrs. Bunnell has been an asset to our family and to watch her with her students is amazing. She is always going above and beyond the call of duty as a teacher to help in events through the PTA as well as helping her parents in so many other ways on her own time. She is amazing teacher as well as person.

Nominee: Stacy Bathrick

Nominated by: Linda Brenneman

Categories: Parenting, Volunteering, Communication, Community Collaboration, Participation in Decision-Making

Write-up: Mrs. Bathrick has been the PTO President for the past 8 years. She is involved with Bluff Elementary School in numerous ways and promotes learning, community collaboration, communication, and participates on our decision-making committee for school improvement. Mrs. Bathrick initiated our annual Health Fair bringing in local health agencies to offer free screenings and educational information. This year we are working to partner with Goodwin Community Center in an attempt to promote fun physical health opportunities in the community. She publishes a monthly PTO newsletter to keep parents informed about the monthly PTO meetings and upcoming educational topics. Mrs. Bathrick and I work hard to make sure we offer topics that are important to parents, i.e. our behavior program, reading strategies for parents, our math program and how it works, how teachers are using Smart board technology, budget updates, NECAP, Map, and DIBELS assessment updates, and many more topics. She helps organize fund raising opportunities; our largest most successful and healthful minded fund raiser is our annual Jog-a-thon. Students are sponsored to run 25 laps around our soccer field and raised between \$6,000 and \$8,000 annually for this one event.

Nominee: Erika Downie

Nominated by: Susan J. Searah

Categories: Parenting, Communication, Volunteering, Community Collaboration

Write-up: Where do I begin? Erika Downie is an amazing parent. I have known of Erika for a good number of years, but during this past school year I became more familiar with her. Erika is a “founding” member of our special education parent resource group which recently completed its first full year in existence. During the planning meetings for this group, she is always the first to volunteer to do

everything and follows through on it all. She is also member of the Salisbury Elementary School PTG (Parent Teacher Group). Erika is also a founding member of Spectrum 46, a group that provides free educational opportunities for educators, parents and community members on topics relating to autism spectrum disorders. CEUs are provided for these educational trainings. Erika is currently exploring another fundraising option and is planning to or has met with or spoken with all principals in the District to gain their “buy in” of this fundraising effort. She is always seeking new members to join Spectrum 46 (and this year she recruited me).

Nominee: Jeffrey Richard

Nominated by: Susan J. Searah

Categories: Communication, Volunteering

Write-up: I am nominating Jeffrey Richard of Merrimack Valley High School. Jeff was instrumental in my child’s success in school, keeping me informed at all times, reaching out to me frequently, asking for my thoughts and input. I would also call and e-mail Jeff quite regularly with concerns/suggestions or just to problem-solve. No matter how many times in one day reached out, he was never too busy to talk with me. He always made me feel like an equal part of the education team who had valuable information to share. He would listen to all and implement suggestions. He always maintained a relaxed tone and sense of humor, no matter the circumstance. At Merrimack Valley High School, we have just completed our first full year of the special education parent resource group which includes parents, teachers and administrators. Jeff is a member of this group. This group meets after his normal “working” hours. He is an asset to our group and has volunteered to work on the web page, a task no one else wanted to tackle. He was available for a panel discussion and openly shared valuable information with the parents at the meeting. I also noted that after this meeting, parents approached him to speak with him on an individual basis. Thank you Jeff!

Nominee: Leslie Want

Nominated by: Susan Uzdanovich

Categories: Parenting, Communication, Volunteering, Community Collaboration, Participation in Decision-Making

Write-up: Leslie Want has been the catalyst that has driven many initiatives at McDonough School. This year alone, under her leadership, we have completed and undertaken the following projects:

- Homework guidelines, folders, planning books
- Comprehensive volunteer guidelines document
- Video for volunteers outlining the ‘dos and don’ts’ of being a volunteer
- First annual ‘step-up’ night for parents
- Resource book for parents
- Science Fair
- Fundraising
- Principal’s Coffee Hour

Leslie is an active member of the PTO volunteering as often as she is able. In addition, she has been the leader in getting McDonough School. She was the initiator in bringing this organization to our building and keeping us involved. She is our organizer, sets our agenda, takes minutes and keeps us all informed through her emails. Leslie even keeps the School Foundation website updated. She represented McDonough School in Washington, DC last summer at the Networking meeting. Her demeanor makes parents feel welcome and she is a great advocate for our school. Her commitment to parents, teachers and community at large is beyond reproach. She truly deserves to be honored for her role in advocating for McDonough students.

Nominee: Merrimack Special Education Parent Support Group

Nominated by: Susan Hollis

Categories: Communication, Community Collaboration, Participation in Decision-Making

Write-up: I am writing to nominate our PACT team for the above award. Our PACT team has been going strong in our town, of Merrimack NH, for over 3 years. It is organized by two very dedicated and busy moms: Barbara Publicover and Patricia Swonger. Together with a handful of other dedicated moms and dads, they have been working diligently with the Director of Special Education, David St. Jean and the Service Coordinators of each of our schools to make a difference for families in our town.

Barbara and the other members, work closely with the staff at PIC and the NH Connections project to develop programs to enhance communication between parents and the school system. Families come to our meetings looking for answers and support and receive it there. The team works hard on encouraging collaboration between families and school system. As a parent, I have seen a real change in how the school communicates with us, not only on a day to day basis, but also on a quarterly basis. We are encouraged to be a major player in our children's education and feel like an equal on our children's teams. Because we have a place to go, we share with others and feel as though we are not alone. We have learned to collaborate with other agencies and feel confident in making decisions that would best effect success for our children. I hope you consider our group for the award. I know they would be surprised, excited and humbled.

Nominee: Candace Cole-McCrea

Nominated by: Julia Freeman-Woolpert

Categories: Parenting, Volunteering, Community Collaboration, Participation in Decision-Making

Write-up: Candace Cole-McCrea is a parent of a child with a disability and she herself has a significant disability. She is very active in promoting the rights of people with disabilities on a personal, community, and statewide level. She volunteers to serve on several boards and councils, including chairing the Disabilities Rights Center's PAIMI Advisory Council and serving on the Board of Directors. She also serves on the Special Education State Advisory Committee on the Education of Students/Children with Disabilities; the Milton School Board; and the State Mental Health Planning Council. Candace has worked as an educator, therapist, and writer for many years. She strives to set the

example that parents in wheelchairs, and single parents at that, can be good parents. She is a fierce advocate for her son Kes. When he has encountered bullying or discrimination, she has waded in and worked to resolve the underlying issues so that he can enjoy the activities he wants to pursue. Calling on her Native American, Quaker, and Transformational Psychologist practices, she works towards conflict resolutions that improve the well-being of all parties to the conflict.

Nominee: Restructuring Team from Northwest School: Lead by Mrs. Shelley Larochelle (Principal), Michelle Bouchard, Michelle Beck, Jennifer Harrison, Brenda Radcliffe, Bridget Krieger, Michelle Macropol, Mary Young

Nominated by: Beth Shea

Categories: Parenting, Communication, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Community Collaboration, Participation in Decision-Making

Write-up: The Leadership Team (Restructuring Committee) lead by Mrs. Larochelle is what I like to think of as our communication hub. A brain trust of various parts of our learning community brought together to work on improving our school as a whole, making decision, communicating the information to and from teachers and parents, and executing the plans to move our school forward. Just in the past year, with their guidance, planning and efforts, our school was able to accomplish the following as a learning community:

1. Our new Home-School communication binders: A school wide system to help parents, children and teacher improve communication, information and homework.
2. Celebration of Staff and Children: The Leadership team has helped raise moral by celebrating grade level and individual attributes that help make our school stronger. We celebrated all three of our Americas choice units when they came to a close on the same day as a school but each teacher was able to do it their unique style and parents were involved! At grade level or cross grade level meeting people were recognized for various techniques used that have really help the children learn or helped their staff members. Mrs. Larochelle also started all staff meetings with positive letters and cards from parents about a variety of staff members.
3. The one million word challenge: The children at Northwest spend their year with one major goal: Read one million words by June! This team leads our school, from nuts to bolts, in a school wide parade down Menville Street in Manchester, NH. This took months of preparation, communication between staff, grade levels and parents. The parade included Max from the Monarchs and the Fisher Cat from the Fisher Cats Baseball Team. The Police dept. and fire department participated alongside all our school superintendents. Families and friends lined Menville Street cheering the children on for reading 1,000,000 words! This all lead up to a school wide song and dance to a remake of the Black Eyed Peas song called "Got to Keep Reading" It was a sight to see and a remarkable collaboration that impacted not only children and families but... hundreds of others who came to watch, take notes and take this celebration back to their school and aim for similar events in 2012! Our team and school was inspiring to other teachers and parents, now that is an impact!

Nominee: Barbara Hemingway

Nominated by: Pam Miller Sallet

Categories: Communication

Write-up: Barbara has been encouraging and demonstrating two-way communication between her program and parents for over 20 years of dedicated service to the Concord community. Barbara's main goal is to have families feel and believe the school cares about them. It's a priority to make the communication between them open, honest, and easy—especially taking time to listen to their concerns. She looks at children beyond their special needs, and helps families do that as well. She has individually reached out to a variety of families in her program, facilitating inquiries, intakes, IEP meetings, and transitions, both listening and asking for their input in a respectful manner. She understands no "one size fits all" will work, as each family needs information and support in unique ways. Barbara also realizes that boundaries are important and necessary to set up and maintain to allow the school to link families to community resources that can address their needs best.

Barbara has utilized the family resource center on-site for joint programming, created a parent support group at families' request with her staff providing support and information as desired by the group, served on committees in Concord and statewide to improve parent-school communication, transitions for families from ESS and to assess relationships with community child care programs using a team evaluation that included parents and discussion of detailed issues as its foundation. Barbara has creatively brainstormed numerous solutions to problems that families have identified, and works tirelessly (often outside of her typical work hour expectations) to meet the needs of both the district and the families. Barbara is a strong leader as well as encourages parents to be leaders through encouragement, communication, and opportunities to participate.

Nominee: Patricia Sanabria

Nominated by: Elena Acosta

Categories: Community Collaboration

Write-up: The American anthropologist Margaret Meade, once said "Never doubt that a few committed people can change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever has." These words resonate with me thinking about Patricia Sanabria. Indeed, Patricia is one of those movers and shakers with unstoppable energy. Her passion shines through with her commitment to the community. Not to mention her deep spirituality and faith. Patricia understands the value of education; in her former life, she was a director of el Centro Escolar Catolico San Vicente de Paul an all girls school in El Salvador. Patricia was instrumental in recruiting parents to attend the Partnerships for Education conference in May of 2010, and this year's conference. The result of her making calls, following-up and being persistent lead to a very successful turn out. She handed the Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) a list of 25 parents who signed on. She has taken early literacy Train the Trainer workshops, and later offered these workshops at Beech Street School and St. Anne-St Augustine Church to Spanish-speaking parents. Patricia has supported PIRC and assisted in recruiting parents to workshops and events speaking from the pulpit of her church and motivating parents one on one on the importance of parent involvement. Patricia Sanabria demonstrates through community collaboration, it does make a difference.

Nominee: Lisa Hanel

Nominated by: Christine Duffley

Categories: Parenting, Communication, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Community Collaboration, Participation in Decision-Making

Write-up: Lisa Hanel was assigned to my son, Christopher Duffley, kindergarten year in the fall of 2007 and remains so today. She is a paraprofessional for a totally blind & autistic, ten year old boy. From the beginning, I knew she was someone special. She was and still is, the link from school to home, designing & fully utilizing our "communication" binder. She participated freely and on her own time, to attend several conferences with me on blindness. She taught herself Braille and continues to do so. Her input & team spirit has been a hub to the wheel of the many services he receives at school, communication with teachers and administration. Shelly Larochelle, Principal of Northwest Elementary:

"Lisa Hanel has worked tirelessly through the last several years volunteering at Northwest Elementary. Some of the critical areas of community building she worked on included the recruitment of parent volunteers, participation in school initiatives, and supporting teachers and students in the classroom. Through Lisa's commitment, other parents have a better understanding, more trust, and a stronger commitment to providing more support at their child's school. Lisa is a true gift for the students and staff at Northwest Elementary."

In conclusion, no one was more proud than Lisa to see Christopher sing the national anthem at Fenway Park this past July. She was surrounded by 40 other Northwest staff/family members that night that she helped coordinate to be there. Now that's Lisa Hanel, not for herself, but parent, student and community.

Nominee: Noemy Barrientos

Nominated by: Elena Acosta

Categories: Learning at Home

Write-up: As a parent who didn't read to her children or volunteer at her children's school, Noemy Barrientos' transformation came when she attended her first Partnership for Education Conference in 2010. She felt inspired of the possibilities she has to offer to her children regardless of her limited English skills or lack of formal education. Noemy's first step was to volunteer at her child's school at Wilson School in Manchester. After taking several workshops--Parents and Schools Working Together, Eric Carle: Story Time and Bonding with Books, she took time out to read to her daughter and began encouraging other Latino parents to do the same. With a fellow congregationist, Patricia, Nomey attended Supporting Language and Literacy Everyday as a Train-the-Trainer workshop in English and later shared this information in Spanish to Latino parents at Beech Street School.

Nominee: Nashua Parent Outreach Group (NPOG)

Nominated by: Marc C. Laquerre

Categories: Parenting, Communication, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Community Collaboration, Participation in Decision-Making

Write-up: Michael Umali, Donna Kraus, Donna Rosenstock and a core group of other parents are the founders of the Nashua Parents' Outreach Group (NPOG). Each is a parent of a student with special abilities. During the 2010-2011 school year, this group of energized parents spearheaded the establishment of the Nashua Parents' Outreach Group (NPOG). The Nashua Parents Outreach Group is a

district wide Family-school Partnership group serving all families of special needs students from preschool through high school. The group has the ambitious and laudable mission of facilitating collaborative efforts between parents, the Nashua School District and the greater Nashua community. NPOG seeks to provide quality training opportunities for parents and teachers on a range of critical topics. NPOG has planned a series of workshops for the 2011-1011 school year that include subjects such as mental illness, parents' rights, and working in a productive and collegial fashion with your child's school team. A vendor fair is scheduled for the fall of 2011 to facilitate an exchange of information between parents and community-based resources. Regularly scheduled meetings will provide opportunities for teachers and parents to communicate about shared concerns. NPOG also seeks to educate parents and teachers about community resources (e.g., Special Olympics, Autism Network, etc.) that will enhance young peoples' access to activities in the community.

Nominee: PIC Volunteer Advocates for Special Education Focus Group on IDEA & the NH Rules: Steve Alexander, Anat Eshed, Rebecca Ladd, Mariellen Mackay, Sylvia Pelletier, Barbara Publicover , Matt Seward, Maureen Shields, Hayley Silva, Trisha Swonger, Maria Yakkey.

Nominated by: Bonnie Dunham

Categories: Volunteering, and Participation in Decision –Making

Write-up: PIC's Volunteer Advocates for Special Education assist parents of children with disabilities to understand their children's disabilities, the special education process, and their role as partners in that process. Their support enables many parents to become more effective self-advocates, who understand the importance of working together with school personnel to meet their children's special education needs. PIC Volunteer Advocates also provide parents and educators with accurate and up-to-date information and resources, including sharing information with them about the services that PIC offers. Quite a few of PIC's Volunteer Advocates are involved at the school district and state levels on positive systems change initiatives, task forces and parent/school partnership groups. In addition to their work with parents, this group of Volunteer Advocates made a difference on a systems level. They dedicated many hours over several months to reviewing Federal and State special education laws and regulations, collecting and reviewing data, and identifying ways that NH's rules support parental involvement, foster parent/school collaboration, and lead to positive outcomes for children with disabilities, through a proactive and clear process, in accordance with best practices. They challenged themselves and each other as they fulfilled their task thoughtfully and thoroughly. The work done by these Volunteer Advocates reinforced that NH has much about which we can be proud!

Nominee: Elizabeth Matthews

Nominated by: Louise Waugh

Categories: Parenting, Communication, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Community Collaboration, Participation in Decision-Making.

Write-up: Betsy Matthews is employed as behavior specialist at Fairgrounds Elementary School, but she is so much more! I became acquainted with Betsy in 2008, when my nephew, who is my legal ward, started Kindergarten at Fairgrounds Elementary School. In the beginning, Betsy would come for half an hour during the two hour parent group meeting on Friday mornings. She brought materials on a topic

such as bedtime routines or age appropriate chores. She presented the information but customized the lessons to each child and family. Gradually, the time during which she presented grew longer and the format changed in response to the needs of families attending the group. When many of the parents started to volunteer at the school, Betsy helped to spread the word to the staff that we were ready and willing to help. Working with the Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRC) committee, Betsy was often helpful in clarifying ideas and adjusting language to make pamphlets more parent-friendly. Through her choice to involve herself with the parenting group, she has demonstrated an amazing and inspiring ability to help with parenting, family communication, and working with school personnel. She will go to great lengths to locate information and services for specific family needs and is always ready to listen, understand, and advise. She brings to the parents wonderful, playful, and educational that helps manage stress and bring a sense of play to the whole parenting experience.

Nominee: Barbara Publicover

Nominated by: Sherry Goldberg

Categories: Parenting, Communication, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Community Collaboration, Participation in Decision-Making.

Write-up: Barbara Publicover is the parent of two children who have special needs, one of whom has graduated from high school and one who is in 10th grade at Merrimack High School. Barbara initiated the Merrimack Special Education Parent Support Group in the fall of 2008 and together with her husband, Matthew Publicover has been the coordinator ever since. See www.merrimackpact.com. The MSEPSG meets monthly during the school year bringing information, professional speakers as well as peer support to parents of children with special needs. Barbara actively seeks input from the parents to ensure the issues they feel are important are addressed. Barbara is always an active participant in her children's education and their IEP teams. She has participated on state wide committees such as the Indicator 14 (Post-Secondary Outcomes) and has just agreed to participate on the state wide committee for Indicator 8 (Parent Involvement). Even though her children are nearly finished with their public school special education process, Barbara continues to actively facilitate the support and sharing of information for parents of children of all ages and range of disabilities. She has kept the District administration entirely engaged with the goals of the MSEPSG while shouldering the work for this group with the help of her husband. In her role as a parent and coordinator of the MSEPSG, Barbara is exemplary in parenting, communication, volunteering, learning, community collaboration and participating on decision-making committees. As a district we are fortunate to have such a dedicated, well informed and considerate collaborator working with parents and professionals to promote the best services possible for the children of Merrimack.

Nominee: Becky Hebert Sweeney and Tina Binette

Nominated by: Marlene Marchand

Categories: Communication, Community Collaboration, Participation in Decision-Making.

Write-up: I am nominating Becky Hebert Sweeney and Tina Binette for the tremendous amount of time and energy that they put into working with my son and me this past school year. They used imagination and compassion. They both were always willing to talk, exchange ideas and definitely think outside the "box". They helped my son have a successful year when circumstances could have led to disaster. I truly value them both. They deserve recognition for their efforts.

Nominee: Gina Sweezey

Nominated by: Christine Tilly

Categories: Communication, Learning at Home, Volunteering.

Write-up: Our family had good fortune to have Mrs. Gina Sweezey of Alton Central School as our family's first-year educator for two of our children. Her kindergarten agenda far surpasses any parent's expectation. With compassion, energy and drive she embraces her role as a teacher and impresses on her students by graduation a remarkable year of learning and memories. Our family is forever grateful to her and it is with absolute pleasure I submit this nomination on my family's behalf.

At the end of every week, Mrs. Sweezey sent a 1-2 page letter home titled, the *Sweezey Scoop*. It included important reminders, a note of gratitude, special guests, helpful guidance were students needed encouragement, opportunities to contribute assistance, details of her lessons and activities in reading (including the book titles!), math, writing, science, and SMART board. In this correspondence, she encouraged parents to contact her with any questions or concerns. The *Sweezey Scoop* was a window to my daughter's school life, helped ensure a smooth transition to her first year of school and opened the door to communication with her teacher. In fall 2010, Mrs. Sweezey provided day care in her classroom for children of parents attending a multi-week, evening parenting course. Later that fall, as a member of Alton Central School's Reflecting and Connecting Team, she coordinated and hosted the *Second Annual Holiday Make and Take Workshop* for parents. In collaboration with her students, their parents, and her assistant, Mrs. Sweezey hosted a Mother's Day Tea event on May 6, 2011. Each student was asked to invite a special lady to celebrate the importance of their role to the student. This successful volunteer effort widened the chance for female role models in our community to enter our school and be welcomed and appreciated. Approximately every 8 weeks, Mrs. Sweezey requested her students to complete crafty or thought provoking assignments like the Mystery Box with family members. She communicated websites used in class for at-home computer time.

Nominee: Valley View Comm. School PAWWS (Parents at Work with Staff)

Nominated by: Carol O'Connell

Categories: Parenting, Community Collaboration, Learning at Home, Volunteering.

Write-up: Valley View Community School is extremely fortunate to have core group of staff and parents that have dedicated themselves to the students and families of Farmington and Middleton. This

past year, with the encouragement of Sue Roy, Title 1 Project Manager and Cynthia Sparks, Principal, the staff did a study group on Ruby Payne's book on poverty. This year using what we learned about our families the staff will be exploring better ways to build trusting relationships with families. Over the past several years Sue Roy has been a strong advocate for families and their needs, managing the Title 1 funds to support our efforts. One of our goals last year was to increase opportunities for volunteering. We were able to keep fingerprinted parents status active and get additional volunteer hours for school activities like the end of the year Field Day. Parents like Michelle Vachon, Tracey Donovan-Lavoilette and Marni Fennessy have been exceptional role model of active, dedicated volunteers. They have given their time and resources since the beginning of our PAWWS group, acting as positive ambassadors for the school, sharing their ideas and time. This year, parent Jessica Cowen and Sarah Baird-Forner joined us. They took the initiative to look into some Literacy programs that were successful at giving away free books and brought the information back to the group. They were also invaluable in supporting teachers in the classroom. In addition to these exceptional parents we have teachers Beverly Bloechl, Pegi Merriman, Cyndi Shost, and Cindy Hunn who in their own unique way inspire their students, parents and the rest of the staff with their enthusiasm and energy for education and encouraging parents to be part of what is happening at Valley View Community School.