

November 2023 Nominations



Courtney Felton – School Social Worker

"Courtney has embraced her role as a school social worker at our ELC! She has worked hard to develop relationships with students. Most recently she put together fun activities, games, and treats for the students to engage in and enjoy! Courtney is also willing to adjust her schedule and help when called upon."

Jenny Mann, Becca Schultz, Katie Grems-Nelson, Jill Rohman, Deb Wallert

"These individuals, my colleagues and friends, are unparalleled! They give and give and give some more, doing whatever is needed for student-centered learning and what is BEST for each of their students. Passionate about their calling to the field, each one of them uses their gifts so well, and encourage and inspire the rest of us to do the same. I am so thankful for our DHH team!"

Lisa Loosbrock- Business Services Specialist

"Lisa is always willing to step in and assist wherever needed. She recently has gone above and beyond and worked extra hours to assist while our department had maternity leaves and is always offering very valuable and knowledgeable advice. She is truly a huge asset to the team."

Abbie Lickteig – School Psychologist

"Abbie continues to go above and beyond in her job. She is a great resource for everyone and is always willing to help!"

Amber Grengs – Senior Behavior Therapist

"Amber G. is a great team player and is always going above and beyond. She always handles everything that gets thrown at her with a positive attitude. Thank you for making Pipestone a great place to work! We appreciate all you do for Pipestone TRC, Amber G!"

Jamie Unke – Systems Administrator

"Jamie has been a fantastic resource for us. He is continually going above and beyond, not only for our region, but also for Region V and their needs. He faces any issues we encounter head on and does his best to resolve them in a timely manner with limited down time for us and our end users. Jamie - We truly appreciate you! Thank you for everything you do for RMIC!"

Tonia Finstrom – Administrative Assistant

"Tonia goes above and beyond to support staff. She is quick to reply to messages and provides directions for all things Special Education from assisting with printing materials to ordering meals on professional development days. Tonia's behind-the-scenes dedication supports teachers and students in our service districts. She ensures everything runs smoothly and provides kind reminders. You are appreciated. Thank you!"

Hollie Pater – ECSE Supervisor

"Hollie is very knowledgeable and always helpful for every teacher she works with! She is passionate about education and always goes above and beyond in all that she does! She is a supportive leader and never hesitates to help out!"

Tera Swenson – Special Education Paraprofessional

"Tera is a student favorite when it comes to her classroom. She is absolutely incredible when working with her students. She has a way of defusing her students before they become too worked up. She has such a calm presence around the students. She is unbelievably kind and caring. She has the biggest heart. Everyone needs a "Tera" in their classroom and in their life!"

Stephanie Streng – Director of Alternative Programs

“Stephanie is a wonderful leader and recently is leading the charge with a Stronger Connections grant work. She and her team in Glencoe are exploring evidence-based curriculums and strategies to support students with deeper learning. Recently, they completed Check and Connect training provided by the U of M, and right away they started thinking how to best implement this to support students and families. Further, her team is really engaged in work across the ALC to strategically plan and identify goals - they are a rock star team, led by a rock star leader. Thanks, Steph for all your hard work!”

Natalie Delmonico – Education Consultant

“Natalie recently chose to join SWWC as an Educational Consultant. She is a wealth of knowledge and ball of enthusiasm for learning. She got started right out the gate and started supporting districts with curriculum and instruction, including literacy supports. Many districts have reported that she has done a wonderful job working with their staff to improve their practices in reading. Another district leader called and said that her approach is kind and so helpful to staff. Natalie is appreciated for her knowledge, and her strong leadership to support others to be their best. Thank you Natalie for all you do!”

Eric Schwankl – Education Consultant

“Eric is a wonderful leader in teaching and learning. Recently he organized and led a wonderful shared services conference for 6 school districts. This conference included both licensed and non-licensed staff with many learning opportunities. He collaborated with multiple speakers across Minnesota to target the needs of the districts. Eric is very supportive of his districts and always available to support their needs. He is appreciated by ALL who work with him. Thank you Eric for being a great curriculum and instruction guru.”

Eriann Faris – Career & Technical Project Coordinator

“Eriann is a dynamo leader and planner. She stepped in last year and has taken off in just one year. She is leading wonderful work across our region with Career and Technical Education. She has been supporting a wonderful multi-district collaborative to provide Intro to Medical Careers course in rural Minnesota. Eriann has innovative ideas and is looking to expand the wonderful programming in our region. Thank you Eriann for leading such great work around CTE in our region. You are appreciated!”

Shannon Gossen – Education Consultant

“Shannon has been leading the charge with Literacy work across our region. She has been working hard this past year training many teachers on LETRS and providing targeted coaching and implementation supports. More recently, she has been leading the Literacy Learning for Leaders series in collaboration with the U of M and HELP. Further, she is supporting leaders in our region to knowing more about the science of reading. Shannon is a wonderful and resourceful team member. Thank you Shannon for all your hard work and supporting our region to be a leader in literacy development across the state. You are APPRECIATED!”

Tegan Gillund – Director of Finance

“Tegan has been working very hard the past few months and it has not gone unnoticed. She has been supporting many departments with budgeting and supporting new project proposals. Tegan is probably one of the busiest people at SWWC, but her door is always open and she is willing to walk and talk people through their questions. Tegan is a role model to all in leadership as she supports all to grow and develop while having a smile on her face and kindness in her words. Thank you Tegan for all you do, and for the positive and uplifting spirit your reflect in your customer service.”

Janelle Field – Lead Instructional Coach

“Janelle Field is a fantastic educational leader. She is always positive and looking for the best in others. She supports her colleagues with great ideas and practices that actually work to help students and teachers be their best. Janelle is the go-to person if you want to know more about anything in education. Her dedication to excellence is admired by all who know her. We are so thankful to work with her and she always keeps us on our toes to improve. Thanks, Janelle. You are noticed and your hard work is appreciated by all who work with you.”

Kay Dann – Special Education Paraprofessional

“Kay is constantly going above and beyond. She always has the students' best interest at heart. She meets them where they are at. When a need arises, Kay is the first to jump in and help. Kay is an incredible member of the SUN program at ELC-Willmar.”

Kim Garcia – Special Education Paraprofessional

“Kim has grown so much in the SUN program over the past year. She gets to know each of the students and has upbeat, meaningful interactions with them. When her student is gone, she always finds a way to help out where needed.”

Taylor Saxen – Speech/Language Pathologist

“Taylor is new to the cooperative and the Pipestone team this year. She has done an excellent job of navigating servicing students virtually as well as in person. She isn't afraid to ask questions and jump in where needed. Thanks Taylor!”

Laura Wurster – ECSE Teacher

“Laura is a fantastic teammate. She is willing to go above and beyond for students and think outside the box. We are lucky to have Laura!”

Mary Kay Caraway – Project Search Teacher

“Mary Kay has been instrumental in assisting with the replication of Project SEARCH at our Worthington Sanford location! She is currently the instructor at our Marshall Avera location. Mary Kay is so passionate about the program and has been a great asset to our team here in Marshall and now Worthington! We are so fortunate to have you on our team! The growth each intern makes over the course of their internships is a direct reflection of your efforts. Thank you!”

Ana Holtan – Special Education Paraprofessional

“Ana is a great team member and always helping out with hands on and suggestions when asked. She is a good example of how to face the challenges of working with our students. Plus she is great at making us laugh with is so important at this job! Thank you Ana”

Cristina Cardenas – Behavior Therapy Assistant

“Cristina has been such a great addition to The READY Clinic- Pipestone. She has great relationships with the staff and clients at the clinic. We are so lucky to have her on our team!”

Amy Sippl – Behavior Analyst

“Amy is a great role model and BCBA. She advocates for her staff and her clients. She is an amazing lead that is very appreciated by TRC staff. Thank you Amy for being a great team leader!”

Ana Youngblood – Special Education Paraprofessional

“Ana is always willing to jump in and help when needed, she's patient with the kids and has created positive, lasting relationships with everyone she's worked and is working with. We are so lucky to have Ana!!”

Mindy Halverson – Site Administrator

“From calling rides to helping in the lunchroom, being hands on with students, to shoveling snow, on top of everything else she does that I don't even know about or can see. I am so thankful to have Mindy as our site administrator at ELC Montevideo.”

Alyssa Schmaedeka – Special Education Paraprofessional

“Alyssa does a great job in our classroom. She builds great relationships with the students in our classroom. She also has done a great job learning how to use ABA desk to track students' behaviors. Alyssa is very reliable, and she is always finding ways to support staff and students in the classroom. I am truly blessed to work with her.”

“Alyssa is dependable, flexible, calm, and a doer. She has been asked to assist in many different classrooms this year and she steps right in with a positive attitude.”

Candace Otto – Special Education Paraprofessional

“Candace has been a big help in the elementary room this year. She is willing to help out when needed in our classroom and other classrooms. She is flexible and is willing to help out where she is needed throughout the entire school. She makes good relationships with the students and staff, we are lucky to have her here.”

Rebecca Norman – Special Education Paraprofessional

“Becky is a true gem. She is always going above and beyond to support students and those that she works with. Becky builds great relationships with students and truly cares for each one of them. Becky always takes initiative in the classroom. I am truly grateful to work with Becky each day.”

Alicia Roelike – Special Education Paraprofessional

“Alicia is always planning fun activities for our staff and students. Recently she organized a fall celebration for our students, which staff got to enjoy as well, and it was such a positive and fun experience for everyone.”

Kelsey Hartzler – Dean of Students

“Kelsey is a gem of a person. She shines when the going gets tough. Kelsey is consistently there for staff and students regardless of the need, no job is too small or big for her! She is a trusted and loving coworker and compassionate adult that our students can rely on!”

“Kelsey is simply AMAZING. Kelsey always goes above and beyond to help anyone and everyone at ELC-Windom! Kelsey cares deeply about the Staff and the Students at ELC-Windom. Kelsey is kind and compassionate. Kelsey brings comfort and consistency to our building every day.”

“I would like to recognize Kelsey because she has been the most amazing addition to our school. She is such a shining light. Her smile is so contagious. She has such a great rapport with the students. They trust her, open up to her, and respect her. They are so happy when they see her in the hallways and when she comes in and visits in the classrooms. They love sharing jokes, laughs, and stories with her and she is always so kind to each and every one of them. As an employee I can say that she has been one of the best I have ever worked under. She is very professional and not only does she help to keep the kids in line but she does the same for the staff. Her kindness, advice, and personality make work so enjoyable. I appreciate that she reminds us when we can make improvements, praises us when we are doing good, is a listening ear when we have concerns and struggles, and reminds us that we are all important members of this team, that we couldn't do it without each other, and she never fails to remind us of that. She is an amazing leader and I am so honored to work with her. She is the most deserving of this award!”

“Kelsey goes above and beyond for every student and every staff. She will always willing to jump in and help as needed. She has brilliant ideas and shows great leadership. We appreciate her more than she will ever know. Windom is so lucky to have such a caring and hardworking person.”

“Kelsey is the most caring person in our building, she wears her heart on her sleeve for everyone. She pours out of her cup for the children and staff, when she has nothing left she's always there for everyone.”

Kristin Lieser- Technology Support Specialist II

“Kristin has gone above and beyond to help with technology requests to support students. When confusion arose about which apps were on which devices she went out of her way to find answers. Her tireless work has helped multiple students across the ELCs access communication supports. She is so helpful and kind when I have a question. Thank you for all you do, Kristin!”