



October 2020 Recipients

CONGRATULATIONS!

Melissa Hanson - Director of Special Education

"Melissa has done a wonderful job assisting the speech therapy department in ensuring that they have materials and resources necessary for delivering services during this unique school year. She has been prompt and clear in her communication as well as organized in her information gathering. Thank you for all that you do, Melissa!"

Tish Kalla - Director of Special Education

"Tish is a wonderful leader! She LISTENS and HEARS staff concerns, needs, and hopes, especially in this time of pandemic. Tish takes time out of her busy schedule to answer calls/respond to emails at the drop of a hat. She actively listens and supports staff, which is sometimes more important than fixing the issue. Tish is down to earth and reasonable, and I can't appreciate it enough! Thank you, Tish, for weathering this season with us special education service providers!"

Tish Kalla - Director of Special Education

"Tish is an awesome support for her staff. She goes to bat for her staff and has the facts on her side. Very happy to have her as our region's supervisor!"

Tegan Gillund - Accounting Supervisor

"Tegan is an absolute joy to work with! She is patient, knowledgeable and thoughtful. She is always willing to assist and her skills definitely help our entire team to be better!"

Kaye Squires - Speech/Language Pathologist

“Kaye always goes above and beyond to provide top notch services to our kids! So, it's no surprise that she's doing this for our kiddos that are also in distance learning! She's creating unique, interactive, and engaging sessions that I know the kids are loving! I thoroughly enjoy working with Kaye and value her expertise!”

Kaye Squires - Speech/Language Pathologist

“Kaye has been extremely helpful with her great tips for providing speech teletherapy. She is always thinking of fun and creative ways to provide virtual services. I very much appreciate and respect Kaye's professional knowledge... I'd be lost without Kaye this year!”

Amy Olfert - Speech/Language Pathologist

“Not much to say except that Amy is killing it switching to telepractice-such great ideas! She is also so good to share with others to help them along as therapists! Amy is a legend.”

Amy Olfert - Speech/Language Pathologist

“Amy has been a fellow SLP I can go to for support, encouragement, and resources! She always welcomes my emails and calls without hesitation. She is patient and an active listener. I know Amy lifts up her families and students, as much as she lifts up her fellow co-workers. Amy goes above and beyond for her students and finds creative ways to provide activities and resources (like making her own speech-language Bitmoji classroom-super cool!). Amy is a GREAT SLP asset to the SWWC!”

Ana Holtan - Special Education Paraprofessional

“Ana is a huge asset to our room! She's always finding creative ways to organize our space and make it more functional. Her patience and sensitivity to the students' needs is phenomenal. Her straight forward yet kind approach with staff is greatly appreciated.”

Shelby Grunewald - Special Education Paraprofessional

“Shelby is awesome at anticipating the needs of students and staff, many times when I've needed her help with something she's been right there with exactly what I need without me even having to ask. She's always finding creative things for our kids to do and is always on top of keeping things wiped down and ready to go. Her patient support is so appreciated!”

Noah Johnson - Technology Support Assistant

“Noah is always on the ball. No matter how dumb a tech question or issue people have, he ALWAYS gets right on it and does it with no complaining. Just a Super Tech Guy! Thanks for all you do!”

Heather Sage - Speech/Language Pathologist

“Heather is such an asset as a fellow SLP. She is leading our SLP Networking Group and is doing a PHENOMENAL job at organizing our large group needs and connecting us. We would all be lost without Heather this year! She's definitely a great leader!”

Heather Sage - Speech/Language Pathologist

“Heather has gone above and beyond this school year to not only reach out and welcome new staff, but to also assist with facilitating communication and student sessions and being a tremendous resource for many providers. It is a year of increased challenges, responsibilities, and stressors for all, but Heather has been a refreshing presence with her patience, welcoming attitude, and team approach. Her hard work and time spent 'behind the scenes' is both valued and appreciated!”

Anna Hesse - ECSE Teacher

“Anna has been a huge asset to me during this crazy hybrid service year. She is willing to help me out with getting materials to and from places for me, join virtual meetings with her to co-treat, assist with therapy activities, and most importantly, she does this with a gracious attitude. This year has been humbling in many ways, and working with people like Anna helps me do my best and continue to love what I do!”

Anna Hesse - ECSE Teacher

“Anna is a great team player and always willing to help others. Her passion and love for ECSE is evident every day! Thanks for all you do, Anna!”

Michelle Niehus - ECSE Teacher

“I am so thankful to work with Michelle who has been an absolute asset to me during teletherapy sessions. She has been willing to gather and set up materials for me, let me join virtual sessions with her to co-treat, and most importantly she does it with such a gracious heart. This year has been crazy and emotional. I love how working with Michelle brightens my day and reminds me that I love my job because I work with amazing people!”

Michelle Niehus - ECSE Teacher

“I appreciate Michelle so much! She has been going out of her way to pick-up and deliver items from the Pipestone office for me. If she didn't do this for me, I would be making an hour round trip to get these items. She always accepts these requests with a smile, and never complains! Michelle is a team player and I can't thank her enough for helping me! She has saved me a ton of time!”

Sandy Karels – Administrative Assistant

"I love working with Sandy. She always makes everyone, especially me, look good at getting the paperwork side of my job done. I love how I can email, call, or text her and say "Sandy, I screwed up again.....can you fix this?" And she always replies.....That's happened to me too! I feel dumb using google sometimes and I realize that google is a monster all in itself and everyone has to conquer this beast. I also love how quick she is to help. If I ask for access to a student or question if the student is eligible for certain services, she replies back immediately. I can easily keep doing my job without any delays. Sandy is a huge asset to our team, and I greatly appreciate her for everything she does for me!"

Jennifer Kimman - Assistant Director of Special Education

"Jennifer has been a huge asset to me this year. She has been easy to call or email with thoughts, questions, or concerns. She has given practical feedback and guidance that is useful for the scenario or situation. However, it has been her random phone calls or emails of encouragement or supportive statements that have meant the most to me."

Marissa Stordahl - Behavior Analyst

"Marissa is continuously developing new and better ways of providing services to our students and staff. The most recent iteration of Marissa doing so includes developing a comprehensive system for getting ELC staff through the online Professional Crisis Management recertification we do each year. Marissa's system enabled the instructor team to easily, quickly, and clearly communicate everything essential to 80+ staff across all ELC locations. Marissa's system enabled SWWC to keep our staff trained in a skillset essential to effectively supporting our students in the ELCs. Thanks Marissa!"

Hollie Pater - ECSE Supervisor

"Hollie always goes the extra mile for her ECSE teachers! She has made my first month of teaching ECSE, a positive experience. I have learned so much and always, always, always answers my questions and is always ready to help! She is passionate about kids and the helping the teachers she works with reach for more! I appreciate her informative webinars and making sure we have important resources on the drive! I'm so thankful for her and couldn't have learned this much without her."

Rosemary Van Meveren - Special Education Paraprofessional

"Rosie has been a great asset to my classroom. Many times she does things without being asked. She is very patient with the students and the students respect her. Rosie collects data on the students in the classroom that is used for IEP goals. When students don't need her she is always cleaning and organizing.

Rosie fills in when the nurse is gone by handing out medications to all the students that need them. She has been a blessing to ELC - Belview."

Julie Schroeder - ECSE Coordinator

"Julie is an incredible leader in the ECSE world. She brings so much knowledge, wisdom and passion to work each day. Thanks Julie for always supporting and listening to me. You are a blessing to those around you."

Julie Menage - Director of Special Education

"I am so thankful for the support and guidance from Julie. She always has a smile and a listening ear. Thank you Julie for being such a bright spot."

Marissa Wittrock - School Psychologist

"Marissa is an excellent member of the Marshall team! She is always helpful in difficult situations or when timelines get tight! She has a great deal of knowledge and is always "there" to lend a listening ear or provide advice. We couldn't do it without you!"

Laura Wurster - ECSE Teacher

"I've have the pleasure of working with Laura within RTR's 3 year-old preschool classroom; and let me tell you, she has the patience of a saint! She remains calm among 3 year-old classroom chaos, and adds so much fun, kindness, and learning. Laura is always so positive and smiling. She pours her energy and heart into that classroom. Her creative activities and projects are so fun to see each week. Laura is a huge blessing to the SWWC and the families she serves through ECSE and Preschool. Great work, Laura!"

Brianna Bridgewater - Occupational Therapist

"Brianna is such a go-getter it inspires others to learn and do more for the students they see. It is very apparent in her actions and attitude that she loves her job and the students she works with. Brianna is a wonderful asset to have on our SWWC and PAS team!"

Tami Hellewell - Occupational Therapist

"Tami does a wonderful job explaining information to parents and student. She is good at identifying ways that occupational therapy services can be incorporated to meet larger functional goals and even transition goals. This is especially beneficial to older students that might otherwise resist accepting help. Tami helps everyone feel good about the services she provides."

Channing VanOverbeke - ECSE Teacher

"I appreciate Channing as a co-worker and friend. She is quick to lend a listening ear, provide ideas and support, and share resources with others. Her fun

personality and positive attitude are contagious. SWWC and her districts are lucky to have her!”

Brianna Grannes - Special Education Paraprofessional

“Bri has gone above and beyond this year with the new teaching models. She's a real team player and will assist with anything asked of her. She goes out of her way to build relationships with the kids. ELC - Willmar is lucky to have her!”

Aida Bautista - Special Education Teacher

“Aida is an amazing teacher that is always willing to help one another out no matter how much work she has to do. She always gets the students to laugh no matter how much of a mood they are in.”