

News Utrust



December, 2009

Awards Program



BEST SCHOOL EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION PROGRAM AWARD: Utrust is excited to announce its latest competition in the Make A Difference program. We will present three awards to the schools with the best employee recognition programs. Beginning in January of 2010, Utrust will keep tabs on how schools are showing appreciation and recognition to school employees for the remainder of the school year. We're looking for the most creative, fun and caring ways that schools show employees appreciation for the job they do.

EXCELLENCE IN EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT AWARD: To do it, your board will have to meet five star standards. Utrust has created the "Five Star Program for Excellence in Employee Management" to encourage and recognize school boards who excel in the area of employee management. Utrust will present an award during our annual Member Appreciation Awards Dinner to each school that meets program standards.

MOST OUTSTANDING DISTRICT APPRECIATION AWARD: From the central office to the schools in your system, everyone in your district needs to participate for you to win. Utrust will again award school districts who go all out and celebrate each appreciation day. Your school district will be honored with an award and presentation about your school system at our annual Member Appreciation Awards Dinner.

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN? Take the Make A Difference Challenge. Rules and Guidelines for each of the three awards programs can be found on our website at: <http://www.tnuct.com/whatsnew.php?id=42>

Writing Competition

Hundreds of entries were submitted in the Utrust Writing Competition this year, honoring employees all across the state. From superintendents to cross walk guards, writers told of the many ways a school employee made a difference in their lives.

Beth Weatherford, a teacher at Lakewood Middle School in Henry County won 1st place of \$1,000 in the Utrust Make a Difference Writing Competition. She wrote about former Lakewood Middle School Principal and current Grove School Principal, Mr. Earl Kendall. "I knew exactly who I wanted to write about when I learned of the writing competition" Weatherford said. "Mr. Kendall was an example for all of the employees at Lakewood Middle and I felt like he should be recognized for his hard work and dedication."

Aaron Gray, a student at Gordonsville Jr. High School in Smith County who took second place was awarded \$500 for his essay about the late Mr. David Carr who was an agricultural science teacher. The 3rd place prize of \$250 went to Union Heights Elementary student Madison Hartsock for her story "The Tornado Difference-A Whirlwind of Change". Hartsock's winning entry was about Hamden County Principal Chuck Carter.



Top: Beth Weatherford and principal Earl Kendall. Bottom Left: Aaron Gray, Bottom Right: Madison Hartsock and Principal Chuck Carter



Clockwise: Fayetteville City Director, Billy Joe Evans, Jackson Co. Director, Joe Barlow, Smith Co. Director, Roger Lewis, Hawkins Co. Director, Charlotte Britton and Wilson Co. Director Mike Davis



A Statewide Show of Thanks for Superintendents

School system leaders were given a much deserved round of applause on Superintendent Appreciation Day, November 19th. Board members, faculty, staff and students all came together and found creative ways to say “thank you”.

Smith County superintendent Roger Lewis was surprised when his board presented him with a resolution, officially declaring the day in his honor. Fayetteville City superintendent Billy Joe Evans was also presented with a resolution at his board meeting along with a slice of cake to make the event that much sweeter. Board members and staff in Fentress County also surprised their superintendent, Mike Jones by enlarging the resolution to the size of a poster, framing it and hanging it in his office.

Jackson County superintendent Joe Barlow was overcome with emotion at his board meeting where members hosted a reception in his honor. Barlow was presented with a giant poster book filled with writings of thanks by students. The book had a superhero theme with pictures of planets and slogans that read “our superintendent is out of this world”.

Students in Hawkins and Carter counties put on a big show for their superintendents. Carter County superintendent Dallas Williams participated in an assembly in his honor. He was also treated to a Thanksgiving style dinner by the central office staff. Representatives from each school showed up and presented him with a token of appreciation. Meanwhile in Hawkins County, superintendent Charlotte Britton was showered with adoration. Students there put on a performance by singing a blues rendition of the “Tennessee Test Taking Blues” and other songs to make Britton laugh. Students also formed human chains around the director, presented her with t-shirts, flowers, cards and even a candy bar the size of a first grader. Faculty and staff joined in on the thanks by making breakfast, presenting her with a plaque and a much needed trip to the spa for some relaxation.

Wilson County put their talent and imagination to use to thank director Mike Davis. He was given a cake in the shape of a castle, an edible bouquet of fruit, posters filled with artwork and notes of thanks, banners and drawings. By the end of the day, his office was filled with appreciation artwork. “We appreciate Mr. Davis for his wisdom, compassion and leadership”, said Pam Peery, assistant to the director “We are thankful to have him as director of schools in Wilson County”.

The job of superintendent is a big one, but on this day, superintendents could have a little fun and enjoy the recognition they so deeply deserve.



Food Service Appreciation Day

It's a new year, and with it, brings new days of appreciation for school employees. Thursday, January 14th is the first appreciation day of 2010. This special day has been set aside to honor food service personnel who keep our kids healthy by providing them with a nutritious lunch and friendly smile. We hope your school district is participating in recognizing these valuable employees and hope you will share your stories with us. If you have an interesting story about how one of your schools, or school board celebrated this day, email it to us, and include photos so we can share it with others. If you have not yet signed up online at www.tnuct.com for an account to access appreciation day materials, do so today. You can also call us or email us, and we'll be happy to walk you through the website and materials.



Claims Update

Claims continue to escalate each month due to the current economy as well as the extension of benefits that our state government passed in June which creates an additional burden on school systems. We have experienced almost double the claims compared to the previous year and it appears that this trend will continue. Although, we have been able to avoid any retroactive rate increases and increasing the taxable wage base limit, we will be unable to avoid a rate increase for next fiscal year. We are pleased that we have been able to help our members avoid the retroactive charges and mid-year increases.

For questions about unemployment issues, go to our website:

www.tnuct.com



1525 Hunt Club Blvd., Ste 300

Gallatin, TN 37066

phone/fax: 615.452.7761

www.tnuct.com

Email: kpendleton@tnuct.com

*We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
May good health, happiness and peace be a part of your
Christmas gifts and your constant companion throughout the
coming year:*

Dan Tollett...Kelli Pendleton...Kristi Coleman