



AMERICAN
SCHOOL
COUNSELOR
ASSOCIATION

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STANTON MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELOR NAMED AS FINALIST FOR SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR

Laurie Knuth from Kent, Ohio Among Top Eight

Alexandria, VA, January 25, 2010 – Laurie Knuth, a school counselor from Stanton Middle School, has been named one of the top eight school counselors in America. Knuth is one of more than 250 elementary, middle, and secondary school counselors nationwide who were nominated for the School Counselor of the Year award. The award, which is presented by the American School Counselor Association, honors the professionals who devote their careers to serving as advocates and often lifesavers for the nation's students.

A counselor for over eight years, Knuth constantly strives to help children have a voice and makes every decision with student advocacy at the forefront. She is particularly focused on supporting at-risk students and has spearheaded a number of initiatives with this aim, including a Homework Club that pairs struggling students with local high school mentors to increase their success of homework completion. She has also established Afro-centric leadership groups within her school and started 4-5-9, a program that pairs high school freshman with fourth and fifth grade mentees to provide them with African American role models.

“Of the educators and counselors that I have worked with, few possess the same personal drive to help each and every student, the same broad perspective on the impact we can make as counselors, or the same leadership ability that Laurie Knuth possesses to change people's lives,” said Jason Gothe, School Counselor, Stanton Middle School.

Knuth's compassion for others extends beyond the walls of her school and into her community. She was approached by Kent State University to run a Portage County College Access Network (PCAN) course for minority, impoverished, or first generation college students and continues to implement this critical program. Knuth also serves on the steering committee for Bridges Out of Poverty as the treasurer and heads the education committee for Portage County. She is also on the board of directors for Coleman Professional Services, an agency that services many clients in a five county region and works towards eliminating the stigma of mental illness.

The School Counselor of the Year awards program was open to all 100,000 members of the school counseling profession. The top eight school counselors were nominated by their peers and administrators and judged by a select panel to be the “best of the best.”

The candidates were judged on several criteria, including: creative school counseling innovations, effective counseling programs, leadership skills, and contributions to student advancement.

“School counselors make significant contributions to the overall well-being of students and their success,” said Richard Wong, Executive Director, American School Counselor Association. “They have unique qualifications and skills that allow them to address students' academic achievement, personal/social and career development needs.”

Knuth, along with the other seven finalists, will be flown to Washington, D.C., on January 27, 2010, for three days of celebratory events. The honorees will have meetings with their Members of Congress, attend a Congressional briefing and reception, and be formally recognized at a black-tie gala.

The legislative co-sponsors for the 2010 School Counselor of the Year program are: Senators Lisa Murkowski from Alaska and Arlen Specter from Pennsylvania and Representatives Raul Grijalva from Arizona and Vernon Ehlers from Michigan. The 2010 program is sponsored in part by Naviance, the Universal Technical Institute (UTI), and the American Federation of Teachers.

For additional information on the American School Counselor Association, please visit www.schoolcounselor.org.

About the American School Counselor Association

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) professional organization based in Alexandria, VA. ASCA promotes student success by expanding the image and influence of professional school counseling through leadership, advocacy, collaboration and systemic change. ASCA helps school counselors guide their students toward academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning to help today's students become tomorrow's productive, contributing members of society. Founded in 1952, ASCA currently has a network of 50 state associations and a membership of more than 26,000 school counseling professionals.

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