



Hillsdale County
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Four Educators Receive Teacher of the Year Honors

Hillsdale, MI, June 3, 2016 –

The Stanton Foundation and the Hillsdale County Community Foundation is pleased to announce two winners of the 2016 Hillsdale County Teacher of the Year award, and two teachers who received honorable mention awards. Joshua Sholler, Reading Community Schools Music Education teacher, was chosen to receive the fifth annual \$10,000 award. Jennifer Duff, Hillsdale High School Business and English teacher, has received a second place award in the amount of \$5,000. In addition, two educators were honored with special honorable mention awards: Hillsdale High School Spanish and English teacher Amy Goldsmith and Pittsford High School Math teacher Darick Clark.

The intent of the award is to recognize educators in Hillsdale County who are known for going above and beyond the standard requirements and job duties associated with being a teacher, who enrich the lives of their students and show dedication to their school and community. First place honoree Joshua Sholler has taught at Reading Community Schools for four years, and sets high expectations for all of his students. Mr. Sholler's goal is that his students will leave the Reading music program as better musicians, better students, and better citizens. In his time at Reading Community Schools Mr. Sholler has organized an alumni band to perform during fall homecoming festivities, applied and was accepted to have the choir sing the National Anthem at a Detroit Tigers game, and increased greatly the number of students involved at all levels of the music program. He says,



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“I have been able to do wonderful things in Reading because my students are empowered, and they know at the end of the day I will always have their back.” Those who nominated Josh shared that he has transformed the music department, that his spirit and enthusiasm has connected with the students and evolved the community as a whole, and has inspired the entire community to rally behind Reading musicians.

Second place award winner Jennifer Duff’s dedication is evident through her personal philosophy of teaching, which is that people learn by doing. Mrs. Duff is deeply rooted in the Business Professionals of America (BPA) chapter at Hillsdale High School, and is very involved with the Study Cup, a student-run coffee shop. She is a firm believer that a hands-on approach not only provides the opportunity for learning life skills, but also provides work experience and helps make connections to the real world. Jenny has a background in business, which allows her to work in a field that is her passion and to show students that passion. Jennifer’s students feel that her classroom environment is enjoyable and that she will do anything she can to help her students to their best and accomplish great things.

Honorable mentions were also awarded to two outstanding teachers. Amy Goldsmith, Spanish and English teacher at Hillsdale High School, has 26 years of experience in education. She allows and encourages students to make personal connections with school subjects so that they find relevance and importance in the material. Amy is very involved in several community service and volunteer activities, including the Freshman Mentor Program, several of the school’s musical theatre productions, cards for Veterans and care packages for troops overseas.

Darick Clark, who has been teaching for 13 years, also received an honorable mention award. Math students at Pittsford High School feel comfortable to ask questions and motivated to do their best. Mr. Clark’s belief is that students do more for a teacher when they are cared for and valued in the classroom, and that getting students to trust a teacher and believe that they have their best interests at hearts is the key to having them perform at high levels. Darick serves on several school committees, has worked with non-traditional and homebound students, volunteers as a referee at junior pro basketball tournaments, moderates at quiz bowl tournaments, and has chaperoned many school field trips.



Nominations were received from educational professionals, students, parents, and community members in general. Over 50 teachers were nominated, with several receiving multiple nominations. All applications were reviewed by a committee, which utilized a points system in evaluating applications. More information about the Teacher of the Year Award or the award recipients can be obtained by calling the Hillsdale County Community Foundation office at 517-439-5101 Monday through Friday from 9 am – 4 pm, or by stopping at the offices located at 2 S. Howell Street in Hillsdale.

The Stanton Foundation was established in 1991 by David and Laura Stanton. This private foundation was established to promote youth and educational programs. The Hillsdale County Teacher of the Year Award was created to honor those who have a most profound effect on young people and who greatly influence the leaders of tomorrow.



Reading Community Schools Superintendent Chuck North, Reading High School Principal Kurt Stump, Teacher of the Year Joshua Sholler, and HCCF President/CEO Sharon Bisher



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