

NEWS RELEASE May 17, 2018

Franklin Co., Butler Co., and Russell Ind. have finalists for statewide Fred Award

Frankfort, Ky – The Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) named its finalists for the 2018 Fred Award.

1. Josh Penn (Custodian, Franklin County Schools)
2. Rita Renfrow (Classroom Assistant, Butler County Schools)
3. Bryan Tackett (School Resource Officer, Russell Ind. Schools)

The Fred Award is a favorite for KASA members, drawing in nominations from school districts across the commonwealth each year. The award, inspired by Fred Shea, the postman who became the subject of Mark Sanborn's national best seller, *The Fred Factor*, recognizes non-administrative staff, students, and volunteers statewide whose daily efforts are deemed extraordinary and integral to a positive learning atmosphere in their school communities.

“We are proud to honor these finalists and introduce them to the world. Mr. Penn, Ms. Renfrow and Mr. Tackett are the best of humanity,” said Dr. Rhonda Caldwell, KASA Deputy Director. “Fred’s are change agents and this award brings them center stage and honors the work they do and the lives they live each day.”

Finalists are selected by a blue-ribbon judging panel representing education leaders from school districts across the state. A film crew visited each finalist's district to capture the spirit of his or her service. Footage from these visits will be presented during the final award presentation July 27, 2018 at KASA's Annual Leadership Institute & Expo in Louisville. Each finalist will receive a \$250 check, overnight lodging at the Galt House Hotel, and a distinguished marble plaque detailing the award. The winner will receive a \$500 check.

KASA is the largest school administrator group in Kentucky, representing more than 3,100 education leaders from across the commonwealth. Formed in 1969, KASA connects education leaders to policymakers, legislators, and other interest groups and provides numerous benefits and services to Kentucky's school administrators.

Brief introduction of the finalists:

Josh Penn, Custodian, Franklin County Schools

Josh comes to work every day at Peaks Mill Elementary with a smile on his face, ready to serve others. Even on the most stressful day, you will not hear a single complaint from him. When it is time to do the dreaded cafeteria duty, Josh just smiles and says, “That’s my favorite part of the day – I get to see the kids.” His attitude is contagious. Students seem to gravitate to him, and he uses his time with them to talk about making good choices and to build them up. Josh takes an active role in educating students. He works with teachers to reward them for good behavior, reads to first graders and listens to some of them read. Josh is a strong role model for the young boys at his school. He asks them about how school is going, if they were able to do their homework, and how their day is going. If he sees that one is having a bad day, he makes a point to talk with them.



Described by his nominator as “our go-to person,” Josh is the model of what it means to be a leader in your job. He is the one who comes in at night to turn off an alarm or fix leaking sprinklers. He’s also the one who comes in early to clear sidewalks. Even when a parent or staff member’s car stalls, Josh is the go to person. When a co-worker lost her husband, Josh used his personal time to mow her lawn the entire summer. He puts this same dedication into everything he does.

Rita Renfrow, Classroom Assistant, Butler County Schools

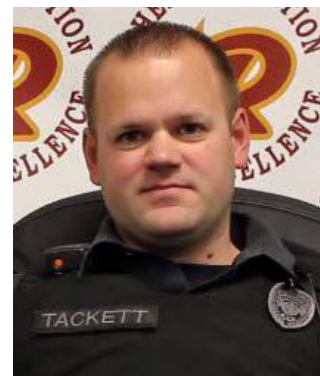
Ms. Rita, as she is called by the students at North Butler Elementary, is known for her kind smile, infectious enthusiasm, and true love for kids. Described by her nominator as “one of a kind,” Ms. Rita approaches each day with pure joy and is always ready to lend a hand, offer love, and show support to students. She has a heart that seems to see into the soul of a child who is lost, hurting, or afraid. She uplifts the spirit and morale of every room she enters. When children see her coming down the hall, they get excited because they know she will take the time to greet them by name, give them a hug, and find out how their day is going.



Rita is a cheerleader for kids, celebrating all their achievements, whether big or small. After getting to know each child, she looks for creative ways to help them learn. Her work has been a valuable part of the school’s success in improving kindergarten readiness scores. She doesn’t just put in time teaching, she puts her heart and soul into her instruction. Whatever the task, Rita is ready to give 110%. At recess time, you will most likely see Ms. Rita hanging with the kids, swinging, sliding, and playing basketball. Even when it looked as though there would not be funding to renew her position, she asked if she could still work with the children as a volunteer. With or without pay, Ms. Rita is determined to do whatever it takes for the children and staff at North Butler Elementary School.

Bryan Tackett, School Resource Officer, Russell Ind. Schools

Officer Tackett makes a difference each day for the students at Russell Ind. Schools. Described by his nominator as a “servant leader,” Officer Tackett genuinely cares about the students he serves. He makes a point to be visible during morning drop off and between classes. He uses this time to monitor behavior, but more importantly, to build relationships with students. He knows most by name and has become a confidant and friend to many of the students. His caring, kind heart and leadership has shown the students that police are there to help them and keep them safe. He is a real person in their lives who truly cares about them. In everything he does Officer Tackett strives to be a good role model for all students, especially those who do not have a positive male role model at home. He never asks students to do something that they don’t see him doing.



Officer Tackett continually goes above and beyond his duty as a school resource officer. He exceeds expectations by recognizing student’s achievements and motivating them to work harder. Making others feel important is what he does best. Even high school students are drawn to him because they know he will take the time to listen and answer questions about things they have on their mind. They know they can trust him. Officer Tackett also works outside of school with students as a Boy Scout leader and softball coach. In everything he does, his heart for students and the community shines through. He inspires everyone to do the right thing and give back to the community.

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