

2009 COMCAST Parent Involvement Matters Award Nominees

Elenilson Ayala [Bladensburg Elementary School, Prince George's County Public Schools]

- Elenilson Ayala has been a parent involvement volunteer at Bladensburg Elementary School for the past 8 years. Seeing the need for parents to be more involved in their children's education and in the school, he took the lead by running for Treasurer on the PTA Board. He was also very instrumental in rallying parents and community members in creating some of the most successful celebrations the school has performed. The Hispanic Heritage Celebration boasted a standing room only crowd with foods being supplied by the parents and the community - it has become an event that families of all cultures look forward to attending. After having regular dialogue with the administration and parent liaison at the school, he realized that there was a need to try to increase the Hispanic parent involvement – many parents did not participate in school-related events or parent conferences due to their language barrier. Mr. Ayala volunteers to translate in PTA meetings, parent workshops, and conferences. Because of his tireless efforts, a tutoring service assisted over two hundred students in the summer months; this helped to keep the students off of the streets and more importantly, strengthened their reading and math skills. Mr. Ayala's dedication and passion for children and getting parents involved, has translated in more involvement from all of the parents and several community businesses.

Mary Baskar [Baltimore County Public Schools System]

- Mary Baskar serves as chairperson for the Baltimore County Public Schools Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee (SECAC); her position affects all schools throughout the Baltimore County Public School System. Her commitment to this position requires many volunteer hours to support the education of children with disabilities. In 2007, Mary initiated an inclusive summer camp program, which resulted in the inclusion of children with disabilities with their typically developing peers in an Extended School Year (ESY) program. Her leadership resulted in the collaboration of parents and Baltimore County Public School staff in the start-up of "Camp Honeybee."

Dawn Branch [Bay View Elementary School, Cecil County Public Schools]

- Dawn Branch became Bay View Elementary School PTO President three years ago, at. Ms. Branch leads the PTO in fundraisers that provide the school with cultural enrichment assemblies, supports the RIF literacy program, provides classroom supplies, and funds several after-school clubs for students that include the Computer Club, Jump Rope Club, and Clay Club. In addition, she has organized PTO school events such as Bingo Night, Trick or Treat Night, Laps for Learning, Story Time for Santa, and the Holiday Shop. Still, Ms. Branch makes time to be a homeroom parent in her son's fourth grade classroom helping students and the teacher, Yearbook Committee Chair, as well as serving as member of the School Improvement Team, responsible for making decisions about school programs.

Jackie Brewster [Charlesmont Elementary School, Baltimore County Public Schools]

- Jackie Brewster brings many talents to Charlesmont Elementary School. Every year, Ms. Brewster coordinates the PTA calendar of events that is distributed to all Charlesmont families. She also coordinates the Attendance Recognition Program that provides a monthly excellent attendance listing of individual students and the end of the year Excellent Awards Assembly. For seven years, she has promoted the home/school Reading is the Core program through weekly fall/spring monitoring and student recognition activities. She is also a member of the PTA Executive Board and as an active member of the Charlesmont Elementary School Improvement Team. Finally, she coordinates boy scout involvement activities that include daily raising of the American Flag, special Earth Day beautification projects around the school campus, and food fundraisers to benefit the families in need within the community.

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Anita Brown [Robert Goddard Montessori School (RGMS), Prince George's County Public Schools]

- To say that Anita Brown is a valuable asset to RGMS, students, parents, and the community at large, is an understatement. Ms. Brown has chaperoned many field trips, taken photos of all major events at the school for the school's yearbook, helped plan a student presentation and costumes for the first Annual United Nations Day and Peace Pole Dedication Ceremony, and most recently, devoted countless hours establishing a Montessori United Nations Team that will represent RGMS in the Third Annual Montessori Model United Conference in New York City. Ms. Brown led a fundraiser to raise money for this event to cover lodging arrangements, meals, vendor donations, and transportation for 42 students and their parents.

David Brown [Westlake High School, Charles County Public Schools]

- David Brown, PTSO President, is credited for spearheading initiatives and innovative ideas which resulted in 200% increase in PTSO membership at Westlake High School. Mr. Brown attends all Back-to-School night events, senior portfolio interviews, sports season informational meetings, and various service learning events in an effort to promote the importance of parent involvement. In addition, he can be found working concessions during sporting events, collecting canned food for the food drives sponsored by the Student Government Association, volunteering as a school safety monitor, organizing membership drives for the PTSO, and cheering on the "Westlake Wolverines" at home **and** away games.

Chad Chitvaranund [Burtonsville Elementary School, Montgomery County Public Schools]

- Chad Chitvaranund has been PTA President for three years, and is a gift to the children, parents, and staff at Burtonsville Elementary School. He has successfully built a community that works together to support the 600+ students at BES. He has been instrumental in acquiring scholarships for students who cannot afford the school's Instrumental Music or Foreign Language for Elementary Student program, as well as for the after-school program, and has acquired grants for teachers to support student achievement. Under his leadership, the PTA continues to fund Destination Imagination so teams can travel to state and global competitions. The school's Destination Imagination program has grown from two teams to four during his tenure. In an effort to inspire staff to move to even greater heights, he created the Star Polisher Award, which recognizes an individual who goes above and beyond the expectations and impacts student achievement.

Carolyn Camacho [Watkins Mill High School, Montgomery County Public Schools]

- Carolyn Camacho has a strong love for the arts, and believes that a positive way to draw students and parents into the school's environment and programs is to promote engagement in school cultural arts activities. Her bilingual skills are as asset as she effectively communicates with parent and draws them into participating in various school/community activities. Ms. Camacho has successfully spearheaded nine proposals for grants, totaling more than \$6K. She is also actively involved in a school extracurricular activity known as "OLAS," which promotes a positive youth development as well as higher level of parent involvement. She recently acquired a grant for OLAS to promote art, dance, theatre, and music.

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Nancy Cason-Collins [Westover Elementary School, Montgomery County Public Schools]

- As Westover Elementary School's 2007-2009 volunteer coordinator, Nancy Cason-Collins has been able to recruit and organize parent and community efforts to make a good school great. Ms. Collins made the Wee Deliver academic program possible so now, each child in the upper grades is paired as a pen pal with a student in grades K-2. This in-house pen pal program not only improves the letter writing skills, but it also fosters good will among students. Ms. Collins is a great role model to the children. While she works full-time at a demanding job, she always makes time to attend the PTA events as well as help with her daughter's classroom parties. Ms. Collins clearly sees the role of parents and teachers as a partnership. In addition, she and her husband have led the Ground Beautification efforts for the school by mulching and planting so that the students have a green environment in which to learn. She is passionate about the environment and channels passion into enhancing the school's landscaping.

Kathi Cottrell [Northeast High School, Anne Arundel County Public Schools]

- Kathi Cottrell is a dependable volunteer at the front-greeter desk who has gone above and beyond the assigned responsibilities of greeting visitors and assisting with security checks. She is an active member of the PTSO, particularly dedicated to the safety of the students at Northeast High Schools. She takes her duties and volunteerism very seriously. Her desire to assist the students and fill-in wherever needed has made her a truly remarkable asset to the school.

Shelly Daniels [Pocomoke Elementary School, Worcester County Public Schools]

- Shelly Daniels has been, and continues to be, an outstanding parent volunteer at Pocomoke Elementary School. Her involvement in school functions from school-based committees to the PTA committee has made her a positive role model in the educational community. Ms. Daniels organizes many events, such as the Box Tops for Education, Teacher Appreciation Luncheon, Fifties Night, Santa's Workshop, the annual book fair, and recruitment of parent volunteers for a variety of school functions. In addition to her fundraising and volunteerism, Ms. Daniels performs clerical duties for classroom teachers and paraprofessionals, and orchestrates a variety of after-school academies. She continues to be a wonderful asset to the internal and external school community.

Brian Dolan [Beach Elementary School, Calvert County Public Schools]

- Brian Dolan has served as either a PTA Officer or a committee chairperson for the past five school years. Mr. Dolan has spearheaded a variety of projects including the School Grounds Improvement initiative to improve lighting, sidewalks, and parking; PTA Auction and Playground Improvements; and recruited an artist, via a school grant, to produce a Wetlands Mural in the school's cafeteria. The mural will be used as an environmental education tool.

Shannon Dooley [Snow Hill Elementary School, Worcester County Public Schools]

- Shannon Dooley is an outstanding parent volunteer who approached the administration to expand her parent volunteer services to the area of Spanish/English Instruction at Snow Hill Elementary School. Ms. Dooley's goal is to foster an appreciation and interest in secondary language instruction at an early age, and to help develop an elementary foreign language program in the school – her vision is to enable students to develop an understanding of and value the ability of speaking a second language. Working together with the classroom teachers and the administration, she aligns her Spanish studies with the reading enrichment program. Ms. Dooley is extremely enthusiastic and she motivates students to learn by making her lessons come alive.

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Dana and Lisa Edgell [Colonel Richardson High School, Caroline County Public Schools]

- Dana and Lisa Edgell are perfect examples of the parental involvement needed not only at Colonel Richardson High School, but at any high school in America. They have continually supported all extracurricular events in which their children have been involved, including baseball, softball, girls' and boys' basketball, football, and volleyball, as well as band, and class-sponsored activities such as the prom and holiday dance. The Edgells were instrumental in putting on two proms (2005 and 2008) that were undoubtedly the most magnificent dances in its forty year history. They also lead the effort of organizing two graduation ceremonies (2006 and 2009). Not only are they tireless volunteers, but they also actively enlist support of other parents and make sure that information is shared in an organized and clear manner.

Angie Ewing [T.C. Martin Elementary School, Charles County Public Schools]

- After serving as a parent volunteer for several years, Ms. Ewing currently serves as PTO President of T.C. Martin Elementary School. She has provided tremendous support for the many programs/projects in the school and has developed outstanding bulletin boards to reinforce guidance lessons and display positive messages throughout the school hallways. Her undying devotion to the students and staff are exhibited throughout the year. Every month, she decorates the cafeteria to help the students celebrate the value of the month. During the winter months, she devotes much of her time assisting with school-wide food, toy, and clothing drives. During the spring, she serves as "Career Day Assistant" by serving refreshments, and decorating the Media Center for participants and visitors. Ms. Ewing has proven to be a faithful, dedicated, and caring member of the school community.

Rita Exter [Patapsco High School & Center for the Arts, Baltimore County Public Schools]

- As Instrumental Music Booster President and member of the school's PTSA, Rita Exter fosters communication that positively impacts the school community. Ms. Exter is an active planner in the boosters Basket Bingo fundraiser, Bull Roast, Care Wash Flea Market, and refreshment sales for concerts, the school musicals, and open houses. She also serves on the Prom Promise committee to provide a safe, substance-free night for seniors after their Prom.

Stacey Gardner [Glen Burnie High School, Anne Arundel County Public Schools]

- Stacey Gardner has been involved in the PTSO at every level of her three children's education, holding positions of Treasurer, Vice-President, and President. In addition to her involvement with the PTSO, she has been an integral part of the Athletic Boosters, as well as volunteering with the Harundale Youth Sports Leagues. Ms. Gardner has actively participated in school fund raising and the Annual Craft Fair. She has partnered with school administrators and staff to increase parent involvement, which is absolutely key to school success every day. Ms. Gardner's volunteer service to our system and the Glen Burnie feeder is greatly appreciated. Her enthusiasm and dedication encourages others and her commitment to advocate for all students is respected.

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Ava Hagood [Brandywine Elementary School, Prince George's County Public Schools]

- Ava Hagood assists many students, including those with special needs, in addition to her full-time work as an EMS Lieutenant with the Prince George's County Fire Department. She enrolled in the Parents Assisting Teachers Training Program, and to-date, has contributed more than 336 hours of volunteerism, although the requirement is 40 hours per year. Ms. Hagood donates an average of 24 hours each week, working with three students who have challenges in reading, math, and social skills. As a result of her intervention with these students, they have made significant improvements in these areas and are more focused in class. During the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays, she not only provided, but she served lunch to the kindergarten students and their families. In addition, she is an active member of the Brandywine PTA, supporting school activities whether it is a fundraising event or an adult learning activity generated by the parents or staff. Finally, Ms. Hagood embodies all of the positive characteristics of parent involvement and has earned the title as Parent Volunteer of the Year at the school.

Trisha Holmes [Deer Crossing Elementary School, Frederick County Public Schools]

- Trisha Holmes, a former educator, has become one of Deer Crossing Elementary's most consistent and reliable involved parent and volunteer. Ms. Holmes utilizes instructional practices to assist students in accordance to teacher specifications. In addition, she monitors students in a math intervention program in the computer labs, works as a homeroom parent, is a member of the PTA and Leadership Team, and coordinates many other school-wide events, such as the "Community Reading Day" which brought community members and local businesses into the school to read and share their experiences with students in grades Pre-K through fifth.

Pamela Hutchinson [Western School of Technology and Environmental Science, Baltimore County Public Schools]

- Pamela Hutchinson is a supportive, creative, and energetic parent who helms the PTSA at Western School of Technology and Environmental Science. As PTSA President, she has grown the membership and participation to new heights. Under her leadership, the PTSA has sponsored safety lectures for student drivers, and lectures for parents on both academic and social issues. She has actively worked to assure the success of the after-prom party, including raising funds, securing the venue, and planning the activities. Ms. Hutchinson has led the PTSA in many other fundraising efforts, to include a scholarship program for high school seniors. Her contributions to Western are tangible and highly valued.

Glenda Johnson [Calverton Elementary School, Prince George's County Public Schools]

- Glenda Johnson plays an integral role in the tutoring program at Calverton Elementary. She is a true example of how the home/school connection makes a positive difference in the lives of children. She works with small groups of children in reading. She assists teachers throughout the school, and specifically, she confirms the importance of mathematics. In addition, she binds books for the school's writing project titled, "Write A Book" contest. Her presence is a motivating influence on the staff as well as the students. It is humbling to know that such character and dedication for the nation's young thrives within the makeup of people like her.

Charmaine Ward-Jones [Bay Brook Elementary/Middle School, Baltimore City Public Schools]

- Charmaine Ward-Jones's diligence and commitment to Bay Brook Elementary/Middle School have made a positive impact on the climate in the school. She possesses exemplary qualities as a parent, while serving as PTA President and Parent Coordinator. To her credit, parent volunteerism has doubled for the 2008-09 school year. Ms. Jones focus is always on what can be done to make the school a great

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place for the students, and she has been often quoted as saying, “It’s all about the kids.” In addition, Ms. Jones is a support system for all Bay Brook teachers.

Lori Krumpach [George’s Creek Elementary School, Allegany County Public Schools]

- For the past two years, Lori Krumpach has served as PTO Secretary and volunteers during all PTO functions, including fundraisers, teacher appreciation week activities, and student activities. Lori also coordinates the PTO’s Santa’s Secret Shop, and she used this event to help children see the importance of giving and caring during the holidays by being giving and caring herself. Ms. Krumpach took photos with her personal camera, and created a memory photo CD for the entire kindergarten. In addition, she volunteers to assist students in the classroom with various academic and social activities, as well as supports teachers with small group instruction in all curricular areas, as well as helps to integrate fine arts into the curriculum with an assortment of specialty skills.

Sandi LeRew [Powhatan Elementary School, Baltimore County Public Schools]

- Sandi LeRew is an asset to the Powhatan Elementary School Community. She volunteers not only in her children’s classrooms but other classrooms where her positive influence helps students become excited about learning. She consults with teachers to decide the best methods to organize classroom space, - she single-handedly organizing classroom space to make it more conducive for students. She also works with teachers to find the best way to disseminate information from the classroom to parents. Ms. LeRew works with the teachers, builds the self-esteem of students, and enhances the curriculum being taught in ways that make learning fun.

Diane Lill [Forest Knolls Elementary School, Montgomery County Public Schools]

- Diane Lill is an environmental whirlwind who has worked with teachers on several grade levels to foster student, teacher, and parent interests in real-world environmental issues. Through hands-on activities tied directly to the Montgomery County Public Schools curriculum, she has brought a variety of programs to Forest Knolls including Trout in the Classroom which teaches children to raise trout from eggs to fingerlings, monitor trout water quality and understanding the intricate web of ecosystems; the Monarch Butterfly Sisters Schools Program which teaches children about the Monarch butterflies remarkable life cycle, including their annual migration, and the impact of deforestation and habitat loss on their survival; and Courtyard Projects to improve an existing school courtyard and to design and develop a second courtyard to attract butterflies and other insects to support the science curriculum for years to come.

Gale Luce [Parkland Magnet Middle School for Aerospace Technology, Montgomery County Public Schools]

- Gale Luce has served as a parent volunteer extraordinaire at Parkland Magnet Middle School for the past three years. Ms. Luce was instrumental in bringing a “cookie dough” fundraiser for Parkland Magnet Middle School. From the organization of the information sessions with the students – to the cookie dough orders and party afterwards – Ms. Luce was able to raise more than \$15K for the school. The money raised enabled the school to offer a special tuition-free summer school program for 30 students with interrupted education and/or very limited English skills. Students have also benefitted from Ms. Luce’s volunteering from receiving special science fair programs, to extra tutoring and other academic assistance because of her willingness to sell cookies. Ms. Luce also assists in book sales, and community garage sales.

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Samuel Macer [Maryland State Parental Information & Resource Center, Baltimore County Public Schools]

- Sam Macer's devotion, commitment, and hard work on behalf of children and families for over thirty years are exemplary. As a parent, grandparent, foster parent, and parent volunteer, he has unique insight in being involved with family and the community and he speaks about his experiences raising foster-care children throughout Maryland. He is a founding member and Vice-President for the Maryland Foster Parent Association; and most recently, he was named president-elect for the Maryland State PTA for 2009/2010. He also sits on the Southwest Citizens Advisory Council for Baltimore County, which invites local state legislators to discuss education issues and to answer questions from area citizens. Mr. Macer acts not only as a mentor for children and families, but also as a role model, who not only talks the talk, but walks the walk.

Jimenez Marisol [Fox Chapel Elementary School , Montgomery County Public Schools]

- Jimenez Marisol is an active parent and PTA President at Fox Chapel Elementary School. She has redirected the focus of the schools monthly PTA meetings to include, specialist teams; tips on assisting children with homework; how to prepare for standardized tests; how to apply for magnet programs; PBIS and English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs; and relevant information specific to each grade level. The student body represents a diverse population and the PTA Executive Board, under the leadership of Ms. Jimenez, has managed to foster and promote a shared vision of commitment, collaboration and involvement to the entire school community. The parent community has greater access to information which ultimately impact student achievement because of her efforts. As head of a bilingual family, Ms. Jimenez has three children who are current or former ESOL students. In addition, Ms. Marisol also takes extra time to translate for the many Spanish-speaking parents, which has been an invaluable to reaching out to the Spanish-speaking population.

Antoinette McCoy [The Empowerment Academy, Baltimore City Public Schools]

- Antoinette McCoy is a dedicated parent, Girl Scouts Troop Leader, and PTO Financial Secretary. Ms. McCoy's efforts and leadership abilities have opened the girls up to a whole new horizon. Since forming the Girl Scouts troop, Ms. McCoy has helped the girls earn patches to include, Harvest for the Hungry, Cookie Trooper, Camping, Safety Wise, WAGGS Postcard Exchange, Skating, and High School Musical on Ice. Her efforts and hard work lead to our very first Girl Scouts Investiture Ceremony in 2008. She truly demonstrates positive traits that all girls should have growing up. Her ability to multi-task, attend meetings, assist in both organizations, and communicate effectively is invaluable and it is because of this dedication that the girls of The Empowerment Academy are growing into active leaders of tomorrow.

Kathie Miliner [Sudlersville Elementary School, Queen Anne County Public Schools]

- Kathie Miliner is PTA President and works with the school's Parent Coordinator to promote parent involvement within the school. Ms. Miliner is also a member of the School Improvement Team and approaches community and/or parental concerns, issues, and comments regarding school-based efforts with thoughtfulness and sincerity. In addition, she is also a member of the school's newly formed Parent Advisory Committee, and often makes suggestions as to how the school may better serve the parents. Not only is Ms. Miliner a vital component of the fundraising efforts, she is an asset to the school and its surrounding community.

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Patricia Miller [Stephen Decatur High School, Worcester County Public Schools]

- Patricia Miller has been instrumental in maintaining and improving the success of existing programs, and has provided vital leadership in the implementation of new activities in Worcester County Public Schools. She has served as the co-chair of the After Prom Committee, and her hard work has resulted in increasing the annual budget to over \$13K. As a member of the Board of Directors of the local Red Cross Chapter, Ms. Miller helped develop a Junior Red Cross Club – the Decatur Lifesavers. This group of students and advisors reach out to the community to further educate them in the areas of disaster preparedness. The club provides students with a mechanism with which to give back to the entire community. Her goals are always aimed toward the improvement of students in our local and global community, and her diligence in pursuing those goals is impressive.

Ministers' Gathering (Pastor Carlton Cartwright, Sr., Pastor Kerry Hinton, Rector Gregory Powell, Pastor George Tasker, Pastor John Woods, Pastor Laurie Zimmerman) [Pocomoke Middle School, Worcester County Public Schools]

- Six years ago, in an effort to reach all families in the small community of Pocomoke, school administrators and educators began meeting with local clergy to support public education. Through collaborative efforts, many programs were developed including the Education Initiative Council (EIC), which assists children from elementary to college level with study skills; an After-Prom breakfast to promote safety; the School Improvement Advisory Council; Ice Cream Socials; and a variety of other school-related activities and programs which address teen issues.

Joyce Murphy [Plum Point Middle School, Calvert Count Public Schools]

- Joyce Murphy is a valuable asset to the PTSA's Hospitality Team at Plum Point Middle School. From her many hours of volunteerism on School Beautification Day to her work at the school's book fairs, she strives for perfection in leadership and it shows in everything she does. Ms. Murphy tirelessly spearheads the "Welcome Back Teachers Luncheon", the "Open House" dinner, as well as the "Holiday Luncheon" for over 80 staff members and 700 students. Along with a donation of her time, Ms. Murphy boosts school morale with her gifts of food during every staff appreciation meal, and treats for student recognition activities. She truly understands the impact that a random act of kindness can have on an individual.

Denise Nicely [Prince Street Elementary School, Wicomico County Public Schools]

- Denise Nicely is currently PTA Membership Chairperson but has also served as PTA President for two years. During that time, she spent countless hours organizing the Teacher Appreciation Luncheons and Holiday Tea for the staff. Ms. Nicely was able to increase PTA membership by nearly 100% by linking the purchase of PTA membership to the School Book Fair during American Education Week. Ms. Nicely and her husband worked the entire week at the Scholastic Book Fair, even though their daughter no longer attends the school in order to promote literacy and expose children and their families to the excitement of sharing a good book. In addition, her fundraising efforts allowed every class to expand its classroom libraries. It is through the leadership and commitment of Ms. Nicely that families and literacy can come together.

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Alma Orellana [Rolling Terrace Elementary School, Montgomery County Public Schools]

- Alma Orellana dedication to advocating for the importance and continuation of excellence in public education have impressed many in the community. As a member of the PTA, she has led the effort of Sallie Foster fundraising for the past three years. She helped form “Los Padres Latinos en Accion”, a school community group that advocates for equity in education and more educational opportunities for Latino children in the community. Ms. Orellana is the parent representative to the Parent Involvement Committee, as well as serves on the Montgomery County Public Schools Parent Advisory Council. In addition, Ms. Orellana received the 2008 Leadership Award for Building Communities from Impact Silver Spring, a community group that identifies, trains, and mentors parent leaders within local communities.

Denise Norfolk [Shady Side Elementary School/Southern Middle School/Southern High School, Anne Arundel County Public Schools]

- Denise Norfolk has spearheaded and implemented programs at three schools in Anne Arundel County, including the Parent Volunteer Program; Dictionary-Thesaurus Drive; Playground Fundraising; Genie Program; and Teacher Elves. As chairperson of the PTA Volunteer Program, she assessed the needs of the school and students with the administration, office staff and teachers; she has brought the volunteer program into the 21st Century. Ms. Norfolk serves as parent liaison for the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Team to help coordinate events and interventions which encourage students to make good choices and change behavior. In addition to Ms. Norfolk’s service to Southern Middle School, she has also been the Volunteer Coordinator at Shady Side Elementary since 2000, thus accumulating 10 years of service to Shady Side and 6 years at Southern Middle School.

David Ottalini [Montgomery Blair High School, Montgomery County Public Schools]

- David Ottalini has shown remarkable commitment to his children’s schools for nearly 20 years, serving wherever a needed. His leadership has fostered greater volunteer involvement at Montgomery Blair High School; helped preserve and adapt existing school resources to the benefit of the community; promoted the arts for young actors and musicians; and incorporated the use of emerging technology to bring a sense of community to the schools, just to name a few. While serving as a PTSA Co-President, Mr. Ottalini was instrumental in starting a Drama Boosters Club and was personally involved in everything from publicity, to taking performance photos and video. In every school his children have attended, he has arranged classroom computer donations, in addition to volunteering in the classrooms regularly, and spearheading PTA mini-grant programs.

Gloria Parker [Worcester Technical High School, Worcester County Public Schools]

- Gloria Parker is a role model for parent involvement and community support of education. Ms. Parker’s efforts in communicating her vision of providing **all** students the opportunity to prepare for college and a career in the community, at Career and Technology Task Force meetings, and the Worcester Technical High School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC) have contributed to not only a new building, several new programs of study (including pre-engineering, early childhood education, and firefighting), but a new interest in technical studies in Worcester County. Ms. Parker is Worcester Technical High School’s team mom. She promotes the school motto “Teach the Whole Student.”

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April Payne [Snow Hill Middle School, Worcester County Public Schools]

- When April Payne's son was at Snow Hill Elementary School, our feeder school, she served as an officer on the PTA and as a member of the School Improvement Advisory Committee. At Snow Hill Middle School, she remains active in the PTA and acts as a conduit between parents and the school, informing and answering questions related to programmatic and fiscal issues. She has worked tirelessly to raise funds for an updated school playground – a process that spanned over several years and involved community awareness and fundraising. She has also worked with local community agencies to obtain funding for a school sign to keep the public informed about upcoming school events.

Vanessa Pinto [New Hampshire Estates Elementary School, Montgomery County Public Schools]

- Vanessa Pinto is an integral part of the School Leadership Team helping educate staff about the Latino community perspective on academics. She frequently volunteers her time and skills in the classroom as well as to the entire school. She serves both on the School Leadership Team and Parent Involvement Committee; attends all PTA functions and Family Learning Nights; participates in the weekly parent coffee and recruits other parents to attend; and often serves as a language interpreter. Staff and students at New Hampshire Estates Elementary School have benefitted from her advocacy by being more sensitive to the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of families. In addition, families have benefitted by having materials better suited to their needs. Ms. Pinto is a proven leader among parents and is driven by a desire to see more parent involvement, particularly among the Latino population.

Sandy Rooney [Mechanicsville Elementary School, St. Mary's County Public Schools]

- Sandy Rooney has been an active parent volunteer at Mechanicsville Elementary School for the past four years. Ms. Rooney serves as chairman of the PSTO Craft Club and implemented the Craft Club, an after-school, hands-on activity for kindergarten and 1st grade students. Ms. Rooney is also Secret Santa Shop Chairman, a three-day event in which each homeroom is given a specific time to buy gifts for their family members, including pets. Ms. Rooney volunteers her time for the PSTO Family Fun Nights, and the Box Tops Program, which has a positive financial impact on the entire school community. Through her leadership and organizational skills, Mechanicsville's school programs are alive and thriving.

Michelle Schachter [Showell Elementary School, Worcester County Public Schools]

- Michelle Schachter has been the Autistic Children's Support Group President in Worcester County for over three years. She has spearheaded efforts to provide schools in Worcester County with materials, training, and monetary support to help improve the education of students with autism. In 2006, Ms. Schachter organized "Ride for Awareness", where participants raised money for kids by completing a spinning class. In addition to all of her work with the Autistic Children's Support Group, she also finds time to be part of the county's Special Education Citizen Advisory Board. She balances the needs of her own children, and the needs of other parent and students with disabled children, by communicating ideas and concerns in a sensitive and constructive way. As Vice President of the Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC) Ms. Schachter has assisted families in finding the resources, funding, and support for their special needs children. Her dedication has made a difference for parents, teachers, and children alike.

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Amber Schaefer [Elmwood Elementary School, Baltimore City Public Schools]

- Amber Schaefer has had a significant, positive impact on public education with her creativity, innovation, and commitment. As PTA President and through her efforts, parent involvement has increased in school-wide book fairs, fundraising events involving local restaurants, and a Dinner with Santa event. In addition to her school contributions, she leads an open meeting each month with the community, and diplomatically addresses concerns. She has collaborated with the school community to organize a toy drive for the children of University of Maryland Pediatric Oncology Unit so that each child in that unit receives a gift for the holiday season. Ms. Schaefer has resurrected an almost extinct PTA to a group that is supportive and successful in reaching their goals for the school. In addition, Ms. Schaefer has been a scouting volunteer for eight years – both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. She believes in the welfare of children and wants all children to succeed in today's changing world.

Stephanie Simms [Patterson Park Public Charter School, Baltimore City Public Schools]

- Stephanie Simms outstanding contributions to Patterson Park Public Charter School (PPPCS) span from her serving as a member of the school's Board of Directors to serving as a volunteer in the school's cafeteria. Ms. Simms is a Co-Chair of the Action Collaboration Team (ACT), which is the action arm of the school's improvement plan. In this role, she organizes and reinforces academic interventions and activities that enhance the learning of all students. In addition, she is Uniform Committee Chair, whose purpose is to create uniform policies and procedures for the school. Ms. Simms spearheaded the planning and coordination of the school's kindergarten picnic, as well as takes key roles in both planning the school's Open House and giving tours to prospective families. Furthermore, she volunteers at the Scholastic Book Fair, assists students during physical education classes, and chaperones an after-school activity at Port Discovery in Baltimore and field trips.

Vanessa Singletary [Franklin Square Elementary Middle School, Baltimore City Public Schools]

- Vanessa Singletary is a dedicated grandparent volunteer and PTA President. Ms. Singletary was one of 25 participants selected, out of over 100 applicants, to participate in the Baltimore City Public Schools Systems Parent Leadership Institute (PLI). Under her exemplary leadership, the school has established a functioning parent room. She has solicited outside resources for parent workshops, organized an 8-week nutrition class for parents to learn about shopping, cooking, and healthy eating. Ms. Singletary has sought resources and grant funding to hold monthly community nutrition classes for parents and the community. Ms. Singleton has said "Kids can light up your day!"

Carol Smalls [Montgomery Blair High School, Montgomery County Public Schools]

- Carol Smalls spearheaded educating the school staff about the grocery store fund raising programs in the Blair community. Through her tireless efforts to advertise, collect, and tabulate an unimaginable number of receipts submitted by families from local supermarkets, Ms. Smalls was able to raise over \$10K which was distributed to programs through the school's mini-grant programs, the After-Prom celebration, and new academy programs. For two consecutive years, these funds have helped double the value of the mini-grant awards the PTSA could award and allowed the PTSA make a year-end gift of \$1K to each of the school's five academies to promote their programs. Montgomery Blair is not the only school where Ms. Smalls has worked her magic - as her children transitioned, so did she – she also tracks receipts at Piney Branch Elementary, Takoma Middle, and Northwood High Schools – raising more than \$4K through the eScrip program for one school.

2009 COMCAST Parent Involvement Matters Award Nominees

Dawn Smith [Grasonville Elementary School, Queen Anne's County Public Schools]

- Dawn Smith is a parent who has made a conscious decision to dedicate her volunteer efforts at Grasonville Elementary School to a subject area for which she is passionate – mathematics enrichment. Ms. Smith holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Maryland in Finance, and has been an advocate for challenging them to incorporate an enrichment math program for the students. Her challenge was not only a call to action for the community, but she rolled up her sleeves to help to build such a program. From this passion came the Math Enrichment Program. Ms. Smith has been involved at every step in the process, developing and implementing this enrichment experience. The Math Enrichment Program is based upon utilizing the *PROJECT M₃: Mentoring Mathematical Minds* format, which is designed to help children increase their ability to communicate mathematicians and become better problem solvers. In addition, she shares her expertise as a parent volunteer with the Grasonville Engineering Club. Her dedication to expanding students knowledge-base by promoting the Math Enrichment Program; her contagious passion for all things mathematical; and her caring spirit have certainly proven to be an asset to all students of Grasonville Elementary School.

Rachel Sorrell [Bester Elementary School , Washington County Public Schools]

- Rachel Sorrell has been a multi-faceted parent volunteer at Bester Elementary School for more than six years. Ms. Sorrell is a working single-parent who has contributed any spare time to volunteering for the Bester Boosters, Inc., the PTA, as well as the NAA Accreditation of the YMCA Bester Afterschool Program. The NAA Accreditation process at the Bester Afterschool Program was in need of restructuring, which Ms. Sorrell played a vital role in to help give quality affordable child care to Bester Elementary families. In addition to her contributions to a variety of school organizations, Ms. Sorrell spends her days off volunteering in her daughter's classroom, and other classrooms when necessary. She is dependable, self-motivated, productive, and punctual. She is truly a valuable asset to the school through her commitment to education, dedication, and countless hours of volunteering.

Glenda Stalnaker [South Carroll High School, Carroll County Public Schools]

- Glenda "Sam" Stalnaker started the PTSA at South Carroll High School. The PTSA makes it possible for all of the school's stakeholders to take an active part in educating students. She is instrumental in the implementation of a strong volunteer program that provides continuous support through their participation on school committees, with extra-curricular activities, organizing fundraisers, assisting individual teachers, and sharing information about the school to the community. Her effective communication skills invite parent cooperation and participation. Her ability to collaborate effectively with administrators, staff and other parent groups are also contributing factors to her success as a school-based Volunteer Program coordinator and trainer at South Carroll High School.

Nicole Stewart [Robert Goddard Montessori School (RGMS), Prince George's County Public Schools]

- Nicole Stewart volunteers countless hours at RGMS as PTSA President, a sponsor of after-school student projects, as School Planning and Management Team Parent Representative, and as a leading figure in establishing a parent education program, "Montessori University" – which sponsors quarterly parent education workshops. Since its inception in 2008, over 350 parents have attended at least one Montessori University event. In addition, the school campus is landscaped with flower-lined courtyards and has well-maintained play areas due in large part to Ms. Stewart's efforts to motivate our staff and community to beautify our campus. Ms. Stewart frequently volunteers in her daughter's classroom and works with all the students. She remains in the forefront of fundraising endeavors that enable the school to meet the needs of all students.

2009 COMCAST Parent Involvement Matters Award Nominees

Paula Todd [Crisfield Academy and High School , Somerset County Public Schools]

- Paula Todd is not only dedicated to her children, but the community as a whole. She has been involved in tutoring students, chaperoning dances, school trips, picnics, grading papers for teachers, volunteering at book fairs, and contacting civic groups, local businesses, and organizations to raise money so students could sing at the White House – this included paying for charter buses, meals, and making sure that every child had the proper clothing to honorably represent Somerset County Public Schools. Ms. Todd exemplifies the true spirit of volunteerism.

Pamela Toomey [Annapolis High School , Anne Arundel County Public Schools]

- Pamela Toomey's dedication has played a vital role in Annapolis High School's (AHS) success and making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Countless students and adults have benefitted from the many hours she spends making students feel safe and supported. In addition to being a PTSA member and working with the graduation committee, she is also a member of the Incentive Committee for Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) Team. In her role with PBIS, she is responsible for organizing and providing incentives for teacher and students on a weekly basis. Ms. Toomey was very instrumental in the planning and opening of the school store, The Panther Den, and The Panther Café. The Panther Café is a safe, supervised place where students and adults can visit after school to de-stress, study, and have fun.

Thomas Tyndall, III [Buckingham Elementary School , Worcester County Public Schools]

- Thomas Tyndell's has diligently served on the School Improvement Advisory Committee and Buckingham Elementary School Planning Council for several years. He advises administration and other schools leaders on parent and community concerns – he is a valuable liaison between the school, board of education, parents and community. Mr. Tyndall played a vital role in helping Buckingham Elementary School to gain accreditation. In addition, he has made job-related presentations to second grade students to give them a hands-on approach to the electricity science unit, and has served as a chaperone on several occasions. Mr. Tyndall embraces the school's motto, "Together for Success" through his unwavering support.

Roxanne Tucker [William Wirt Middle School, Prince George's County Public Schools]

- Roxanne Tucker currently serves as Vice-President of the PTSA which sponsors a multi-cultural dance; Harvest Fair; and a health fair for the families in the community. Ms. Tucker also assists in the Parent Resource Room; she completed the Parent Assisting Teachers Program, which enables her to assist in the classroom and to provide clerical assistance in the main office. Ms. Tucker offers valuable insight to the School Compact and Parent Involvement Policy. She is truly an asset to William Wirt staff and students as well as the community.

Rhonda Ulmer [Van Bokkelen Elementary School, Anne Arundel County Public Schools]

- Rhonda Ulmer participant in Maryland Parent Leadership Institute (MD-PLI) – a three-weekend institute designed to empower parent to work in partnership with schools to increase student achievement – and led a Parental Involvement effort that won her PTA National Recognition. In addition, Ms. Ulmer helped establish a variety of community partnerships to help increase student achievement and build relationships with parents through use of community resources including, An Education Night supported by the YWCA Family Support Center and Anne Arundel Community College; a GED program that included free child care and transportation; a Boys and Girls Club partnership to help families learn how to use computers; a Southwest Airlines partnership which combined math, science, geography, history, and creative writing into an educational adventure for students; and continued math and science nights to help parent learn how to support their child academically.

2009 COMCAST Parent Involvement Matters Award Nominees

Dennis Walters [Millington Elementary School, Kent County Public Schools]

- Dennis Walters has been an advocate for the students of Millington Elementary School and the students of Kent County. Mr. Walters serves as a volunteer for the “Character Counts” program – once a week he spends 20-30minutes delivering Character Education to third grade students. In addition, he serves as Treasurer while also serving as Treasurer for the Kent County PTA Council, and serves on the State Board as well. Mr. Walters has been instrumental in many fundraising activities and parent-family friendly events. Mr. Walters is an enthusiastic supporter of students and parents.

Kathy Wool [Snow Hill High School, Worcester County Public Schools]

- Kathy Wool, the parent of Snow Hill High School students, has dedicated herself to helping students live healthier lives. As a dietician for the Worcester County Health Department, she has seen the devastating impact of health-related illnesses such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. Without hesitation, Ms. Wool volunteered to organize and teach a class during after-school hours that would focus on healthy lifestyles and nutrition. Not only did she teach the class, she recruited others to help her with the physical fitness component. The result was a 12-week course open to all Snow Hill High School students. The class met once a week and included a discussion, food preparation demonstration, and a period of movement and flexibility exercise. In addition, Ms. Wool is a member of the School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC). This committee of stakeholders is established to evaluate and maintain methods to improve the operation, climate and community relations of the school. Because of the public speaking requirement of this position, volunteer to carry out this task are few and far between. Ms. Wool flawlessly presents the school’s budget proposal to both the Worcester County Board of Education and the Worcester County Commissioners. Her cooperation, philanthropy, and time are greatly appreciated by the students, staff, and community of Snow Hill High School.

Allene Wyatt [John Hanson French Immersion Elementary/Middle School, Prince George’s County Public Schools]

- For well over 6 years, Allene Wyatt has worked tirelessly on the French Immersion Program at the school. She has advocated before the PGPCS Board for a French-speaking principal; certified French-speaking teachers, French classroom instructional materials, as well as renovation of the 50 year old school house. Ms. Wyatt has had many accomplishments including the school’s Annual “La Fete de la Francophonie” event which recognizes and celebrates the French language spoken around the world. Since its inception, the event has attracted more than 1,200 attendees who gather to witness K-8 students and teachers perform songs, dances and skits from the French Diaspora. Parents, school, embassy and county government officials, and dignitaries representing Francophonie counties sample culinary delights representing a variety of French-speaking counties. Through her efforts, more than \$12K in grants and donations has been secured to allow the school to host this event free of charge to all attendees. Her ability to raise funds and solicit community businesses and organizations for support is truly an asset.