

Press Release



Battle Ground Public Schools

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Five honored for ‘making a difference’

Zach Tetz, a fifth grade teacher and math specialist in his eighth year at Laurin Middle School in the Battle Ground district, won the coveted Belle Staley Lawrence Award in the annual “Teachers Make a Difference” ceremony Tuesday.

The award includes a \$2,000 prize. Tetz was one of five Battle Ground Public Schools’ staffers honored at the Tuesday evening event, sponsored by the Battle Ground Education Foundation (www.bgef.org).

In presenting the award, Laurin Principal JoDee McMillen praised Tetz’ dedication to his students, even after they are no longer in his class.

“He really, truly cares about them, and not just for a year,” she said. “It is throughout their whole middle and high school life. He checks in on them to make sure they are doing OK.

As evidence of that, a high school student who had been in Tetz’ room several years ago attended the Tuesday night event in support of his former teacher.

McMillen said Tetz “makes math fun and helps kids make connections between math and the real world.” She noted that, on his own initiative, Tetz this year started an after-school math club, which attracts students from other rooms in addition to his own fifth grade class.

The annual Teachers Make a Difference Awards date to 1998 when Battle Ground businessman Robbie Agard wanted to honor Belle Staley Lawrence, a fifth grade teacher who had made a significant difference in his life. In her honor, Agard established the Belle Staley Lawrence Award, the cornerstone of the Teachers Make a Difference Award program.

Prize money is provided by a Robbie Agard endowment and private individuals and businesses. Nominations are invited every year from the public, school district employees and students. Judging of the nominations to select the winners is done

by a committee that does not include district employees.

Winners of the 2011 Teachers Make a Difference Awards were announced and introduced by their respective principals, each of whom spoke movingly about how their winning teachers have been an enduring and positive influence on students at their schools.

The 2011 winners are:

Riverview Community Bank Award, \$500 -- Deb Lindgren, Prairie High School pre-school program

Battle Ground Auto License Award, \$500 – Tom Wolverton, Prairie High math and science

Anita Bolton/Warren Reeves Award, \$500 – Kelly Truscinski, Glenwood Heights and Pleasant Valley primaries, English Language Learners

Pat Pettichord Award, \$750 – Gary Albers, CAM, social studies

Belle Staley Lawrence Award, \$2,000 – Zach Tetz, Laurin Middle School, fifth grade and math



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