

Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance: Presents annual Rural Awards

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Seven individuals and one organization were honored by the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA), a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping address challenges faced by rural school districts, at the annual Rural Schools Conference on October 25, 2021.

The Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance was formed to help rural school districts address the unique issues that affect rural schools as they seek to achieve the highest quality education for every student. Members include a cross-section of administrators, educators, school board members, post-secondary representatives, rural community members, business leaders, and other concerned individuals who want a strong voice for rural education.

WiRSA presents the rural awards annually at their Fall Conference to recognize outstanding individuals and organizations for their contributions to rural education. Nominations are submitted by the WiRSA membership in eight categories: Rural Teacher of the Year, Rural Administrator of the Year, Rural Principal of the Year, Rural School Board Member of the Year, Rural Support Staff Person of the Year, CESA Employee of the Year, Rural Community Partner of the Year and Rural Advocacy Award.

Congratulations to this year's recipients:

Rural Teacher of the Year: Dena Brechtel, High School Math Teacher at Waterford Unified High School. Dena was Nominated by Director of Marketing and Communications Kate Brown.

Rural Administrator of the Year: Mark Gruen, District Administrator, Royall School

District. Mark was nominated by community member Ryan McKittrick.

Rural School Board Member of the Year: Gary Gilbank, Clinton Community School District School Board. Gary was nominated by Clinton Community School District Administrator, Jim Brewer.

Rural Support Staff Person of the Year: Karen Mead, Karen is the Registrar and School Counseling Office Administrative Assistant at Mauston High School. Karen was nominated by Mauston Teacher, Leah Lechleiter-Luke.

CESA Employee of the Year: Hilary Cordova, Hilary is the Director of Finance at CESA 9. Hilary was nominated by CESA 9 Administrator Karen Wendorf-Heldt

Rural Community Partner of the Year: Norm and Carol Aulabaugh. Norm and Carol are from Parkview School District. Norm and Carol were Nominated by District Administrator Steve Lutzke.

Rural Advocacy Award: Ron Fruit and Fruit Broadcasting, WRCO in Richland Center. Ron was nominated by Ithaca School District Administrator, Julie Prouty, and the Ithaca Administrative Team.