

A National School Public Relations Association award-winning newsletter

## Congratulations Quarterly Award Winners

Superintendent John L. Barry recognized 10 individuals who make a difference in the lives of APS students in the first Quarterly Awards Recognition Ceremony. To see the winners, turn to page 2.



## Hinkley Science Teacher Lands Spot as Television Host

Imagine hosting your own show on your favorite network. Hinkley science teacher Gianni Thompson no longer has to imagine. This self-proclaimed do-it-yourselfer learned recently that he is the winner of the DIY network's "Stud Finder" contest.

Thompson was chosen as a finalist after attending a casting call in September in Denver. "My wife convinced me to enter and practically tossed me out of the bed on the morning of the contest. I'm glad she did," Thompson said.

A DIY network crew surprised him in late October with the news that he had won the national contest. When the network crew arrived in his science classroom at Hinkley, Thompson thought they were filming him for a story about all the finalists. When the Hinkley band, cheerleaders and other school staff arrived, Thompson realized that the script had changed. Amid the celebration, DIY representatives presented him with a tool belt and announced that he had won.

"It is amazing that out of all those contestants, they chose me. I still can't believe it," Thompson said.

Thompson appeared on NBC's *Today Show* in October and will be profiled in a one-hour special "DIY's Stud Finder," in early 2007. He will host five episodes of his own home improvement series scheduled to premiere in 2007.

## Want to learn more about APS?

- To learn more about staff accomplishments, visit the Staff Showcase page at [www.aps.k12.co.us/staff/showcase.html](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/staff/showcase.html).
- To learn more about student accomplishments, visit the Student Showcase at [www.aps.k12.co.us/students/showcase.html](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/students/showcase.html).
- To learn more about community partnerships, visit [www.aps.k12.co.us/community/partners.html](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/community/partners.html).
- Aurora Public Schools also publishes weekly stories on the back page of the Aurora Sentinel. To access these stories, log on to [www.aps.k12.co.us/communications/ads.html](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/communications/ads.html).
- All APS news releases are also available online at [www.aps.k12.co.us/communications/releases.html](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/communications/releases.html).
- E-News: <http://www.aps.k12.co.us/communications/enews/>.
- **To sign up for our online community newsletter, Community Connection, visit [www.aps.k12.co.us/communications/connection/](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/communications/connection/). Subscribers receive regular e-mail updates.**

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## Congratulations Quarterly Award Winners

Superintendent John L. Barry honored eight staff members, a parent and a community/business member with Superintendent Quarterly Awards. Each quarter Barry will honor outstanding contributors to Aurora Public Schools. Each quarterly winner is eligible for an annual award.

*Classified Employee, support*



**Kathy Zinter**  
*Accounts Payable Clerk, Highline B*

The winners were nominated by staff, parents and community members.

Photos of Quarterly Award winners will be displayed on a special "Wall of Fame", located outside the boardroom in the APS Administration Building.

Students, parents, staff and community members may submit nominations online at [www.aps.k12.co.us/hr/awards](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/hr/awards) for the winter quarter.

*Superintendent's  
Quarterly  
Award*

*Classified Employee, secondary*



**Tonia Norman**  
*Principal's Secretary,  
Aurora Central High School*

*Classified Employee, elementary*



**Maria Varela**  
*Kitchen Manager,  
Laredo Elementary School*

*Licensed Employee, elementary*



**Janette Wilkins**  
*Teacher/Teacher Leader - Literacy,  
Peoria Elementary School*

Quarterly Award Winners (continued)

*Licensed Employee, elementary*



**Laurie Foster**  
*Art Specialist,  
Kenton Elementary School*

*Administrative & Professional/  
Technical employee*



**Christine Johnson**  
*General Education Supervisor,  
Transportation Services*

*Licensed Employee, middle school*



**Dan Wright**  
*Teacher, Mild/Moderate Special Ed,  
Columbia Middle School*

*Parent*



**Debbie Bailey**  
*Parent,  
Arkansas Elementary School*

*Licensed Employee, high school*



**Jeff Sweet**  
*Coach,  
Gateway High School*

*Community/business member*



**Phyllis McNeal**  
*ProLogis,  
Community/Business member*

# APS in Action

## Aurora Central Staff Members Tell Their Story

Lynn Fair, Janet Clark and Michelle Otte are especially proud of what's taking place at Aurora Central High School to increase learning for students. So much so that they told the school's success story in an article published in the Sept. 2006 issue of the National Association of Secondary School Principals' *Principal Leadership Journal*.

Clark, Fair and Otte wrote the article "Reform on the Move." It highlights Aurora Central's three-year literacy instruction plan. To read the article, visit: [www.aps.k12.co.us/staff/literacy.pdf](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/staff/literacy.pdf).



## APS Parent Becomes APS Employee

Crystal Corefield walked into her son's classroom at the APS Child Development Center and wanted to help. She never expected that someday she would end up working for APS.

Corefield volunteered in her son Jonathan's classroom a few days a week. After settling her son into class, she spent time reading stories to students and playing math games to make learning fun. An APS teacher suggested that Corefield apply for a paraeducator position. She took the advice and was hired last year. Corefield completed child abuse, first aid and CPR training. She also successfully completed the No Child Left Behind Training and scored 100% on the math section.

"I was so nervous about taking the NCLB training. I can't believe I was a parent, and then a volunteer, and now I work for APS. I love it here," said Corefield.

This year Corefield works in two classrooms, touching the lives of 60 students daily. She helps students with art projects and group activities. "We are lucky to have her in our class. She comes in with a smile and really enjoys the work that she is doing," said CDC teacher Laura Moran.

## APS Board of Education Honors Classified Staff

The APS Board of Education honored all classified staff during Classified Employee Week, Oct. 13-17. The board sent thank you letters to staff. In addition, the board bought lunch for classified staff at the following randomly selected sites:

Sixth Avenue Elementary School  
Jewell Elementary School  
South Middle School  
East Middle School  
William Smith High School  
Applications Services  
Human Resources



## From the Classroom to the Front Office

Surrounded by photos of past and present students, North Middle School secretary Ann Heintz greets visitors with a smile and warm hello. She has a long history with North. Heinz doesn't just work at North, she was a student there when the school opened in 1958. She graduated from Aurora High School, now Aurora Central, in 1963.

Heintz has worked for APS for 20 years. She started as a Title I paraeducator, worked as an educational assistant and has been North's secretary for seven years. "I love what I'm doing," she said. "There has not been a day that I haven't wanted to go to work."

One of the photos on Heintz's wall is of Jessica Rodriguez, a current North teacher and former student. "Ann is proud to be a North staff member. Her passion is to work with students, and she is the backbone of this school," said Rodriguez.