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Moving moments

Smithtown School District recognizes staff, community members with awards

By ANTHONY LIFRIERI

While most workplaces have casual Fridays, this Friday was anything but for several members of the Smithtown Central School District.

Four longtime members of the district as well as a community organization were announced as SCOPE Award winners during a ceremony that went from the New York Avenue School, Nesauake Middle School, St. James Elementary School, Taackan Elementary School and even the Sachem School District's Administrative Office, Friday, January 31.

The honorees included Karen Van Dover, Jane Groneman, Dr. Allyn Leeds,

Board Member Michael Saidens and the Smithtown Children's Foundation, who will be formally awarded at SCOPE Education Services' annual district awards dinner at Villa Lombari's in Holbrook, Monday, March 23.

"As a group, they make me proud to work in the Smithtown Central School District," Smithtown Superintendent Russell Stewart said. "These people and organizations are some of Smithtown's finest. You don't always get the opportunity to acknowledge the best of the best, but the SCOPE Awards afford us the opportunity to acknowledge this fantastic group of people and the Smithtown Children's Foundation."

The SCOPE Awards recognize the best each school district has to offer in terms of personal and community volunteers. It is part of SCOPE Education Services, a private, not-for-profit organization permanently chartered by the New York State Board of Regents to provide services to school districts in the state.

The ceremony informing the group they won was the brainchild of Mr. Stewart, who wanted to make the SCOPE Awards more than a letter in the mail for the winners. At each stop, administrators from the central office as well as students in the schools surprised the award winners while Stewart made a brief speech.



Smithtown Superintendent of Schools Russel Stewart congratulates Jane Groneman, of St. James Elementary School, upon her selection for a SCOPE award.

-Anthony Lifrieri photos

"Although SCOPE has its own celebration [March 23], the announcement and surprise element of receiving the news at their own school added a personal touch," Mr. Stewart said. "We gave them the opportunity to get the news in front of their



Amid a group of elementary schools, Superintendent Russel Stewart (back left) notifies Takan Elementary School Principal Dr. Allyn Leeds (back center) that she is SCOPE award recipient.



At the New York Avenue School Friday, January 31. Superintendent Russel Stewart (second from left) notifies Christine Fitzgerald and members of the Smithtown Children's Foundation of their SCOPE award.

them the opportunity to get the news in front of their students, something they won't get at the dinner. At the end of the day, we're all here for the students, so allowing them to take part in it really added to it all. On top of that, we allowed the students to see absolutely fabulous role models."

One of the recipients surprised was Ms. Van Dover. "I wore the right shirt today," she said. "The shirt says, 'make today amazing,' and you all certainly did."

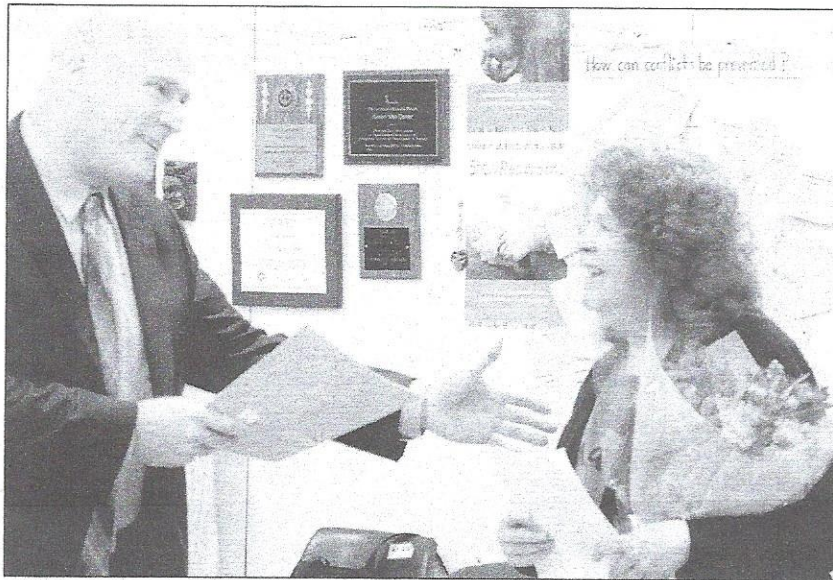
The festivities began at the New York Avenue School, where the Smithtown Children's Foundation was announced as the Community Service Award for the school district.

"We didn't start our foundation for accolades, but it is nice to be recognized

but we're grateful the school district appreciates what we do."

The Smithtown Children's Foundation is a not for profit organization providing financial and emotional support to families undergoing hardships in the Smithtown community. It was formed in 2008 to help a local kindergartener, Kaylee Ann Rivers, diagnosed with Stage IV Neuroblastoma, and continues with helping others in the community like Patrick Kinane, a then Smithtown West junior and member of the varsity boys' soccer team diagnosed with cancer. The movement has spread to include a Haupaunge chapter, as well as Tristin's Wish, Silent Night, smiles 4 S3an and Anthony's Hope.

"We're very proud of what
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Smithtown Superintendent of Schools Russel Stewart presents Karen Van Dover with flowers after informing her that she has been selected for a SCOPE Award.

Superintendent scopes out winners

(Continued from page 3)
we've built," Ms. Fitzgerald said. "This organization is our lives. There's no holidays or weekends for us. We talk about what we're working on all the time, and as soon as we're done with it we're onto the next thing."

The next stop on the SCOPE tour was Nesaquake Middle School for Ms. Van Dover, who was given the district's Teacher Service Award. Ms. Van Dover has worked within the Smithtown Central School District for the past 51 years. She has served as an instructional specialist within the social studies department and is well-respected by her peers, according to Mr. Stewart.

The ceremony then shifted to St. James Elementary, where Ms. Groneman was given the Support Staff Service Award. Ms. Groneman has served as senior clerk typist at St. James Elementary since 1997 and is considered the "face of the school," according to Mr. Stewart. She is considered a superhuman multitasker by her peers and regularly extends her workdays. During vacations, she voluntarily visits the school to care for its chickens.

After leaving St. James Elementary, the group went to Tackan Elementary, where Dr. Leeds was given the Administrator Service Award. Dr. Leeds has worked in the Smithtown School District for the past 14 years,

spending a majority of that tenure as principal of Tackan, as well as a year as Assistant Superintendent of Pupil personnel Services. Dr. Leeds is a highly respected educator who places the needs of her students above all else, according to Mr. Stewart.

The SCOPE tour concluded at the Sachem Administrative Office where Mr. Saidens was announced as the School Board Service "Shining Above the Rest" Award winner. Mr. Saidens is in his fourth year of service as a member of the Smithtown School Board and is its current Vice President. He has also served on the Instructional Services, Legislative, Business Affairs and Audit committees, as well as worked as a liaison to the SEPTA and PTA Councils.

Mr. Stewart said he and the administration were happy with the way the award announcements went, and wishes them all the best when they receive their awards during the formal ceremony in March.

"I think it all went really well because the element of surprise made it more exciting," Mr. Stewart said. "How many times do we get the opportunity to have five surprise parties within a three-hour timespan? I love being a part of a fabulous group of people who announced the awards for such special people. It was a truly intimate moment within the walls of a great school district like Smithtown."

Deadline nears for party enrollment

In advance of the 2020 campaign cycle getting into full swing in New York State, the Suffolk County League of Women voters wants eligible voters to be aware of the rules related to enrolling in a political party.

In New York State, only voters

enrollment (one party to another) may be made on an official Voter Registration Form, which is available online, at post offices, libraries, or Department of Motor Vehicle offices.

When received by February 14, party enrollment applications

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