

# the Putnam Pioneer

A Putnam City Schools Foundation Publication

Spring 2017

## Mission Focus: YES! Grant Fund

In celebration of the Putnam City Schools Foundation's 30th Anniversary, we started a new giving opportunity to provide our teachers and building leaders a way to fund dynamic needs with quick turnaround times.

Our chairman, Roger Cude, named it the YES! Fund because we want to be able to say "YES" when our teachers want to do something a little extra for their students.

So far this year, we have had the opportunity to fund a few small things that make entire projects possible.

We covered transportation costs for the Pink Fluffy Unicorns to travel to a Lego League competition in Tulsa under the guidance of Excellent Educator and Teacher of the Year finalist, Angela Owen. They had a great time and wrote us the sweetest thank you letters.

Another exciting project we were able to help with is a makerspace at Putnam City West High School.

A makerspace is a place where students can come together and explore their creativity in an unstructured environment using whatever materials are available. We purchased a 3-D printer, a Cricut electronic cutting machine and a digital scanner, along with other smaller materials, to make librarian



*Pictured left to right: PCHS students attend a STEM event, Northridge Elementary's Pink Fluffy Unicorns compete at a Lego League event and PC West library staff, Susan Hendricks and Jill Slay, pose with makerspace materials.*



Jill Slay's vision come alive.

We had the chance to support young women at Putnam City High School who are interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) by covering the cost of substitutes for teachers Chelsea Herndon and Teneisha Weatherall.

They accompanied female students to a screening of *Hidden Figures*, followed by a panel discussion with Oklahoma women who work in STEM fields.

Finally, we've been able to provide more iPads to the students at Wiley Post Elementary School as they strive

to achieve a 1:1 ratio of students to devices in grades 3-5.

We've been able to make these generous gifts thanks to companies and individuals who donate directly to the YES! Fund.

We hope to fund 30 projects this year in celebration of the 30th anniversary, and are constantly looking for great ideas that enrich the educational opportunities of students in Putnam City Schools.

If you would like to support this effort, please reach out to Jennifer Seal for a list of current projects that are awaiting a passionate advocate for education.

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# Putnam City Schools 2016-17 Excellent Educators named



**Andrea Selfridge**  
Hilldale  
Elementary School



**Angela Owen**  
Northridge  
Elementary School



**Patrick Terry**  
Kenneth Cooper  
Middle School



**Neeli Boyd**  
Wiley Post  
Elementary School



**SueAnn Powers**  
Putnam City North  
High School

## Round We Go:

### *Excellent Educators Represent the best of Putnam City*

One of the best things we at the foundation get to do is participate in the selection of the Putnam City Teacher of the Year. Our board members interview the candidates and always comment on how uplifting the experience is.

These educators have already been named teacher of the year for their individual school sites and then submitted written materials, which a separate committee used to narrow down the group to five Excellent Educators.

We asked the same questions of each candidate, beginning with "Why did you choose to be a teacher?" I was so touched by the answers we got to this one because it reveals the heart of a person.

Many of the Excellent Educators came from teaching families. Some of them always knew they wanted to teach. Consistently though, they could point to a few teachers along the way who made a difference in their lives and set an example.

Hearing their stories, and

learning about their desire to help children made me so excited for our kids and for Putnam City as a whole.

These teachers are in frequent contact with parents, to share both good news and bad, but mostly to let parents know that they are on the same team trying to do what is best for the child.

They are taking advantage of technology in a variety of ways to stay engaged with their students. They lead after-school activities from sports to STEM Club.

The most frustrating part of these conversations was the almost unanimous answer to "What is the greatest challenge facing educators in Oklahoma?"

You might think the number one answer was lack of pay. You would be wrong. The biggest concern these people have is that they don't feel valued by the public.

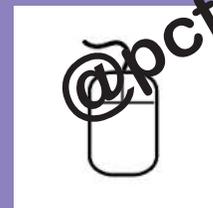
This, of course, breaks my heart because I know how hard these people work on behalf of their students.

Despite that sobering turn, these interviews were so gratifying. I

am proud to work on behalf of teachers like our Excellent Educators in Putnam City because they make a difference each and every day.

In just a few short years, one of their students could be in a future interview saying something positive about how a particular teacher encouraged them to help others, and they chose to do that by teaching. And so the circle continues.

*This article was previously featured on the PCF weekly blog Feb. 9. To catch up on all blog posts, visit [www.pcf4kids.org/putnam-city-schools-blog](http://www.pcf4kids.org/putnam-city-schools-blog). Excellent Educator photos by Steve Lindley.*



## Scholarship Recipients Announced

Congratulations to the students and teachers chosen for the 2017 Putnam City Schools Foundation scholarships and thank you to all those who applied!

- **Parker Millspaugh**, Putnam City North High School - Dorothy Nixon Mem. Scholarship
- **Sarah E. Jones**, Putnam City North High School - Roger Barrios Scholarship
- **Sabrina Stewart**, Kirkland Early Childhood Center - Ralph Downs Scholarship
- **Courtney Bacon**, Overholser Elementary School - Roberta Jo Lowe Scholarship

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## Neeli Boyd named Putnam City's Teacher of the Year



Superintendent Dr. Fred Rhodes congratulates Neeli Boyd on being named Putnam City's District Teacher of the Year at a reception March 7. Photo by Steve Lindley.

Congratulations must go out to Neeli Boyd, a first-grade teacher at Wiley Post Elementary, for becoming the 2017 Putnam City Schools Teacher of the Year.

The top five candidates from throughout the district, collectively known as Excellent Educators, were all quite inspirational, and this decision was agonizing.

The Foundation plays a role in this process by providing financial support for the Teacher of the Year reception and stipends to the winners, thanks to our steadfast sponsor Independent Insurance Agents of Greater Oklahoma City.

Our board members also sit on the Excellent Educator interview panel, offering their input on which

of the top five should be selected.

Boyd was chosen because of her in-depth communication with parents and high expectations of her students. She is dogged in getting parents involved in their child's education, even visiting them at work if needed to build that relationship.

Not to brag too much, but her mother is a teacher in our district, and she herself grew up in Putnam City. In her interview, she mentioned the value of another Foundation program, Early Birds, in getting children ready to learn.

We are quite proud of Ms. Boyd, and look forward to seeing her success as she competes for state teacher of the year.

# Operations Dept. stays busy with improvement projects districtwide



*Chief Operations Officer Cecil Bowles took time recently to update us on the many wonderful projects happening throughout Putnam City Schools.*

The place looks “marvelous, just marvelous.” I wish you could hear my accent! It was good, promise!

If you are close to my age, I know you heard it in your head. You might have even said it out loud. No really, Putnam City Schools is “moving on up.” Oh, there I go again. I think I have just dated myself!

The Operations Department is happy to share a little about the progress we are making on our projects across the district.

Many projects, including three new storm shelters – at Hilldale Elementary School, Windsor Hills Elementary School, and Lake Park Elementary School – are complete.

All three of these are bond projects that were only made possible due to your support of our Centennial Bond in 2014.

**THANK YOU!**

They are beautiful additions to these sites and bring a real sense of security to our families. Our goal is to continue these additions across the district as soon as we can.



Other completed projects are new stage curtains at 18 different sites, interior corridor upgrades at Hefner Middle School (bottom photo), façade and roof updates at Mayfield Middle School.

We have also finished kitchen and dining room renovations at Western Oaks Elementary and Middle Schools and stage rigging upgrades at Putnam City West High School (top left photo).

Projects currently underway are a new baseball field, new softball dugouts and tennis court

upgrades at Putnam City North High School (middle photo).

Improvements to the tennis court include resurfacing, as well as new lights, new wind screens and new nets. Putnam City High School’s gym renovation and upgrades to Putnam City West’s and Putnam City North’s football venues are also in the works.

In addition, Northridge Elementary School and Tulakes Elementary School are beginning roof and HVAC upgrades, which should be complete by August 2017.

Fifteen sites will undergo gymnasium bleacher upgrades over the summer. These upgrades range from complete replacement to motorizing or installing new bleacher covers over the older wooden bleachers.

We are excited about these projects and many more being done across the district. Keep your eyes on PC and enjoy the progress.

Thank you for your continued support as we strive to make Putnam City the best!



# Swimmer celebrated with 14th annual PCF Wall of Fame event

The 2017 Wall of Fame Celebration, honoring Chief Ross Swimmer, was an uplifting and delightful evening by all accounts.

We were able to increase our donations by \$10,000, which means we can do more for our children!

Thank you to all who attended.

## PC Foundation's new event *Indoor Recess* on tap for June 13

Remember when it rained during elementary school, and we had to have indoor recess? Your memory might include playing board games and group games like 7-Up.

We're inviting you to a grown up version of that experience Tuesday, June 13th. It'll be a combination of trivia, family game night, and group activities!

Water's Edge Winery is hosting us as our venue sponsor. Your \$250 entrance fee for a team of eight includes two delicious pies from Marco's pizza, soda, snacks, a tray of gourmet brownies, and two bottles of wine from Water's Edge.

If wine's not your thing, the same package is available without the wine for \$200. Sponsorships are available for this event, so please consider promoting your business with us.

We will have prizes for winners and the best team theme. Get your group together TODAY, because we only have space for 12 teams!

From left:  
Joseph, Margaret  
and Ross Swimmer  
pose with Ross's  
official Wall of  
Fame portrait,  
which now hangs  
in the Putnam City  
Administration  
Building.

Photo by Oklahoma  
School Pictures.



Putnam City Schools Foundation  
2017 Wall of Fame Celebration



From left:  
Northridge  
Elementary  
School's Greg Kipf,  
Kim McLaughlin,  
Tamara Vaught,  
Amy Armstrong  
and Angela Owen.  
Photo by Oklahoma  
School Pictures.

Putnam City Schools Foundation  
2017 Wall of Fame Celebration



From left:  
Members of the  
Chickasaw Nation,  
our "Make it Happen"  
sponsor, join 2014 Wall  
of Fame honoree Neal  
McCaleb (far left) and  
his wife, Georgeann.  
Photo by Oklahoma School  
Pictures.



Putnam City Schools Foundation  
2017 Wall of Fame Celebration



## Did you know?

*Make a lasting impact through planned giving*

The most efficient and simple way to leave a gift to the Putnam City Schools Foundation is to include us as a beneficiary of your retirement plan. By simply adding the Putnam City Schools Foundation alongside your other beneficiaries with a percentage or a dollar amount, you won't have to change your will or trust to have a lasting impact on our students. If you decide to do this, please let us know so we can thank you properly!

# Six recognized with 2017 Golden Apple Award

Each year the Putnam City Schools Foundation is pleased to work with the district to identify outstanding volunteers, community members, substitutes, and staff who make a difference in Putnam City.

The purpose of the Golden Apple Award is to define, recognize and reward excellence in education for the personnel and patrons of Putnam City Schools.

This year's stellar nominees made the task of choosing winners extremely difficult. We are grateful for each person who took time to nominate these worthy individuals.

The Golden Apple Awards selection committee, made up of volunteers from throughout the district and led by PCF board of trustees member, Michael T. Leake, Jr., chose six recipients for this honor.

Pam Fielder, financial secretary at Ralph Downs Elementary School, has served Putnam City Schools in this capacity for 26 years. Those who nominated her said she is "the heart of our school" and that "her kindness helps start your day off on a positive note."

Elizabeth Hannenberg is a second-grade teacher at Overholser



Clockwise from top left: Pam Fielder, Elizabeth Hannenberg, Allison Kitchens, Lynne Kluever-Johnson, Dr. Philip Palmer and Rebekah Whittaker

Elementary School. She is praised by those who nominated her for "constantly researching new ways to engage students in class content" and making teaching fun for those who work with her.

Allison Kitchens is a pre-kindergarten teaching assistant at D.D. Kirkland Early Childhood Center. Her nominators described her as a "special lady with a giving heart" and "a wonderful support system to the classroom."

Lynne Kluever-Johnson is a parent volunteer at James L. Dennis Elementary School. She was nominated for her willingness to help out, not only in her son Callan's class, but also wherever she is needed within the school. According to those who recommended her for the

award, "she thinks of the unspoken needs that often go unnoticed and fills them without question."

Dr. Philip Palmer is a family medicine physician who volunteers his time at Coronado Heights Elementary School. He performs medical exams necessary for special education students to participate in Special Olympics and has done so for the last 15 years.

Rebekah Whittaker teaches fourth-grade at Wiley Post Elementary School. She is praised by those who nominated her for changing the lives of her students for the better. "She displays unconditional love from the moment the school day begins."

Congratulations to this year's winners and thank you to the selection committee for putting in the effort to recognize our best.

## **Contact Us!**

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