

UTAH AFTERSCHOOL AWARDS



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD **VANESSA WILSON | Salt Lake County Youth Services | 2 years in the field**

Vanessa has been a committed member of the Salt Lake County Youth Services Kearns Junior High team since March of 2017. She takes initiative and is always the first person to get things done. She really goes the extra mile to get along with her team and to meet the needs of the students in her program. She sincerely cares and truly tries to help the youth she works with. As a Youth Leader, Vanessa is dedicated to not only working with youth but mentoring and inspiring them. She possesses a very special gift with her passion for teaching youth about their self-identity, to have a voice when they see injustices in their communities, and about new career focus opportunities. Vanessa has so much potential to continue down the path of youth development and she has a hunger to be an afterschool professional.



YOUTH CHAMPION OF THE YEAR AWARD **BEN DANIEL | Promise South Salt Lake | 5 years in the field**

Ben's colleagues report he is an incredible and inspiring person to work with. His grace, communication style, compassion, and positive attitude are only the beginning of how he is a light at the Hser Ner Moo Community Center. He has not only helped grow the program from 8 to 80 teens over the past five years, but he has become an anchor and mentor to the youth by supporting them through every challenge associated with being a refugee and a teenager. He is committed to ensuring the teens grow up to their highest standards and helps the teens maintain academic excellence and good school-day attendance through mentorship and tutoring. Ben knows everything that is going on in the teens' personal lives, from knowing which days the youth cook dinner for their families to which youth is preparing for a test. He ensures youth attend the program and will personally go to their homes if needed. He has each youth's best interest in mind and ensures high quality lessons are being taught that will benefit the youth's advancement and ensure they are career ready.



PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD **SHANNI CALL | Boys & Girls Clubs of Utah County | 20 years in the field**

Shanni has been a leader in the afterschool movement for over 20 years and was instrumental in the early years of the statewide afterschool movement. She served as Executive Director and founder of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Utah County, was the first Executive Director of the Utah Afterschool Network, was the original director of the Utah STEMfest, and she organized many of the first statewide annual afterschool conferences. With such a distinguished career, Shanni is more than qualified for any afterschool position; however, she chooses to make a difference as the director of operations in the program she founded more than two decades ago. In the last several years Shanni has expanded programs, created a comprehensive training system for her staff, and established several strategic partnerships in the community. An example of her dedication to kids includes increasing program quality by hiring specialists to teach professional level dance, arts, ASL, sports, and prevention programming, which normally would cost several hundred dollars per month per child, however Shanni has worked hard to make these programs available to low-income children for only \$5/month. Shanni's dedication to young people is evident from her consistent advocacy for afterschool over the past 20 years.



TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD **VANDAL FORD | Salt Lake City School District | 5 years in the field**

Mr. Ford is always helping with afterschool program activities and events and expects nothing in return. He not only teaches Chess Club and helps with math in the afterschool program, he also supports the summer program. Before working at Glendale Middle School, he left his mark in Midvale by influencing and impacting the community through afterschool programs. His response to the question "How you doing, Ford?" is always "Better." When asked "Why better?", he responds with "If you're not doing better than you were, then what are you doing?" Those that know him say he goes out of his way to build relationships by learning all staff and students' names and he always stops to have genuine conversations about life.

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REGIONAL CHAMPION OF THE YEAR AWARD

JEANNE NIELSON | Cache County School District | 20 years in the field

Jeanne is in her 35th year as an educator and 20th year in afterschool. She currently works as the Afterschool Programs Coordinator for Cache County School District. As an afterschool champion, Jeanne is a fantastic liaison between the afterschool program staff and the school district officials to ensure there is a seamless coordination of services for students and families. She is always willing to share Cache's unique experiences, successes, and challenges with others in hopes of strengthening the statewide system of afterschool programs. As a member of the Alliance for Youth (an organization that focuses on afterschool programming), Jeanne has been instrumental in keeping the school board, local and state politicians and community members

aware of the importance of high quality afterschool programs in the Logan area. She has even advocated on the national level for afterschool programs. Jeanne is a true Regional Champion for afterschool. Her passion and commitment to the students, families, and program staff is evident through her actions every day.



EXEMPLARY PROGRAM OF THE YEAR

NEW BRIDGE ELEMENTARY YOUTH CLUB | Boys & Girls Clubs of Weber-Davis | 3 years in operation

New Bridge Elementary Youth Club serves over 100 children and fills a great need in the community. By utilizing innovative strategies, the program staff have aligned their program to the school day by working with teachers who run daily clubs. The children have autonomy and can select what programs and clubs they want to participate in, which allows them to manage what they learn from day to day.

Because of this program, kids feel more comfortable being at school and know that learning can be fun outside the normal classroom. The program also makes the school safe and comfortable for parents to connect with teachers and staff through family nights. This program runs smoothly each day and is a haven for the participating kids.



THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
UTAH EDUCATION
POLICY CENTER

NAA RESEARCH AND EVALUATION AWARD

UTAH EDUCATION POLICY CENTER | 12 years researching in the field

The National AfterSchool Association's Most Influential in Research and Evaluation nominees are recognized for their contributions to the field of afterschool. Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC) was among the 19 distinguished organizations in the country to receive this award in 2018. As a research-based center at the University of Utah, UEPC partners with state agencies,

schools, districts and community-based organizations, which results in the unique opportunity to bridge research, policy, and practice. Their work with funders who invest in multiyear evaluations has resulted in a body of knowledge that documents not only the impact of afterschool program implementation and outcomes, but the implications for ongoing improvement and policy solutions that leverage resources in new and creative ways. The UEPC's work has resulted in more informed and effective technical assistance, increased state-level funding for afterschool programs, and improved statewide capacity to ensure that youth and families have access to high-quality afterschool programs throughout the state.