

Rotary Club Honors Urbandale Facilitator of Family Outreach With Hero In Education Award

Heidi Zwick receives the 2015 Ken Lepley Memorial Hero in Education Award for her expertise, leadership and advocacy of students and families in the Urbandale Community School District

URBANDALE, Iowa – August 17, 2015 – The [Rotary Club of Northwest Des Moines](#) recently celebrated the expertise, advocacy and leadership Heidi Zwick brings to students, families and colleagues at [Urbandale Middle School \(UMS\)](#) by presenting her with the 2015 Ken Lepley Memorial Hero in Education Award as well as \$500 to use toward professional development or school supplies. The annual Hero in Education Award is presented to an educator that has gone above and beyond the responsibilities of a professional educator. Zwick, who has been a Facilitator of Family Outreach Services in the Urbandale Community School District for over five years, has made a profound impact in the lives of middle school students both inside and outside the classroom. She is an integral member of the problem-solving team at UMS, a highly-valued member of the district crisis-response team and a trusted colleague as staff rely on her expertise.

“Heidi is a wonderful advocate for students and helps to empower them every day. She does this through direct work with the students, as well as support to parents and school staff,” said Dr. Keri Schlueter, Coordinator of Student Services, Urbandale Community School District. “It is a blessing to have her on staff.”

Service above self is not only the essential criterion for the Hero in Education Award, but is how Zwick’s students and colleagues would best describe her depth of character. She has been instrumental in advocating for students and families and takes a keen interest in the well-being of those around her. Zwick can often be found listening to a student’s concern, providing encouragement to a student or colleague and implementing solutions that bring about positive change.



Heidi Zwick receives the Ken Lepley Memorial Hero in Education Award from Committee Chairman Dr. Roger D. Nyberg, Rotary Club of Northwest Des Moines.

In previous years, Zwick has facilitated an after-school group for girls—OMG, Officially Magnificent Girls—whose aim is to provide a network of support for girls in order to increase self-confidence, compassion and resiliency for success inside and outside the classroom. Zwick has worked with the Urbandale Community Action Network (UCAN) to provide tutoring services at UMS. Currently, Zwick is part of the #BRAVE program. BRAVE stands for Be Real And Voice Everything which serves to promote kindness and build empathy.

“I feel fortunate to be in a position where I enjoy coming to work each day,” said Zwick. “I work with some incredibly talented people at the middle school and am so appreciative that we share a vision on the importance of developing and maintaining positive relationships with our students and families.”

Last year, Zwick and UMS School Counselor Ashley Danner, wanted to enhance an after-school program, the Bug Club, in order to increase student knowledge, deepen understanding and provide more hand-on learning. Through a grant they received from the Urbandale Education Foundation, they invited the Insect Zoo from Iowa State University to attend a club meeting and truly bring learning to life for students.

In addition, Zwick and a Facilitator of Family Outreach Services colleague Shawn Karaidos, have also developed and implemented an annual program to help students have a positive transition from elementary school to middle school. The program is entitled, Movin’ On Up, and focuses on helping students become comfortable with the many differences that come with daily life in middle school. This is a big endeavor that requires planning for two days of activities, the hiring and training of staff to run the program and overseeing all promotions and registrations related to the program. Feedback from students has been extremely positive as students report making strong connections to their peers, feeling better about how to open their locker, feeling better about finding their way around UMS, being on time for class and feeling better about having more classes and multiple teachers.

Zwick’s steadfast dedication to bringing positive change for students, families and colleagues is nothing short of profound. Her passion for helping others, combined with her pursuit of mastery, are the foundation for her altruistic and effective leadership style. Urbandale congratulates Zwick on this much-deserved honor and is thankful for the valuable contribution she provides to UCSD families. To learn more about how Urbandale is bringing learning to life for everyone, visit:

Showcase.UrbandaleSchools.com

About Rotary

Rotary International is an organization of business and professional leaders who provide humanitarian service and help to build goodwill and peace in the world. There are 1.2 million Rotary members in 34,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas. Rotary clubs have been serving communities worldwide for more than a century. The first Rotary club was founded in Chicago in 1905. To learn more about the Rotary Club of Northwest Des Moines, visit <http://portal.clubrunner.ca/1664>

About Urbandale Community School District

The Urbandale Community School District includes portions of Des Moines and Urbandale, Iowa. The district serves over 3,900 students in six elementary schools, one middle school and one comprehensive high school. The Urbandale district supports an increasingly diverse student population where over 51 languages are spoken. Building on the existing foundation of excellence in education, Urbandale is transforming education throughout

the district. By implementing innovative [Quality/Continual Improvement](#) strategies that create learning environments that more fully engage, challenge and motivate students, Urbandale is taking transformation from theory into practice. Urbandale prepares students for becoming lifelong learners and is a school district that brings learning to life for everyone. To learn more, visit: www.UrbandaleSchools.com

Urbandale Community School District
11152 Aurora Avenue
Urbandale, IA 50322

Contact:

Dena Soenke
Communications Partner
Urbandale Community School District
soenked@urbandaleschools.com
(515) 868-1879

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