



For Immediate Release

Rotary Club Presents Urbandale Special Education Teacher With Hero In Education Award

Julie McKibben receives the 2013 Ken Lepley Memorial Hero in Education Award for her visionary leadership, steadfast commitment, and wholehearted support for students and their families

URBANDALE, Iowa – June 27, 2013 – On June 14, 2013, the [Rotary Club of Northwest Des Moines](#) celebrated the dedication and heartfelt connection Julie McKibben brings to all her students by presenting her with the 2013 Ken Lepley Memorial Hero in Education Award as well as \$500 to use toward professional development or supplies in her classroom. The annual Hero in Education Award is presented to a teacher that has gone above and beyond the responsibilities of a professional educator. McKibben, Strategist II: Mental Disabilities Teacher at [Urbandale High School](#), was recognized for her work in transforming the Special Education Program to more closely align with the Urbandale vision of being a district that brings learning to life for everyone.

McKibben became a catalyst for change when she took over the program five years ago. She believed students with intellectual disabilities needed a functional curriculum that integrated academics with real-life application. Through the implementation of [Quality](#) learning tools, McKibben and her team empower students to have greater ownership and voice in their learning, thereby increasing engagement and improving achievement.



1. Julie McKibben, Strategist II: Mental Disabilities Teacher at Urbandale High School, receives the 2013 Ken Lepley Memorial Hero in Education Award at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum.

“Julie McKibben believes that every child can and will succeed in an educational setting with the proper curriculum accommodations and modifications. She is determined to get to know not only each child’s strengths and challenges, but also to build a positive relationship with each child and his or her family. She is the type of educator that is constantly reframing challenges, putting a positive spin on them, and working as a team member to develop a plan for students to increase their success. I’m thrilled to see Julie recognized with the 2013 Ken Lepley Memorial Hero in Education

Award as it is a much deserved honor,” said Brenda Auxier-Mailey, Director of Student Services, Urbandale Community School District.

McKibben is not only an inspiration for her students and their families, but is also a leader in creating awareness and building understanding for how to best support students with intellectual disabilities. She leads professional development sessions in the areas of economic diversity and at-risk learners, and serves as a valuable member of the Urbandale Continual Improvement Leadership Team and Special Education Continuing Improvement Committee.

McKibben has also developed many strong connections in the community in order to provide her students with opportunities to participate in community-based education. In 2009, McKibben, her students, and the [Urbandale Chapter of Best Buddies](#), brought to life a district-wide program called the Clothing Closet. The Clothing Closet is a student-run, non-profit business that accepts clothing donations in order to provide clothing free of charge to those in need. The Clothing Closet became so successful this past spring that it outgrew its space at the high school and expanded to a satellite location next door to [The Urbandale Food Pantry](#).

McKibben and her team are a true reflection of the district’s focus on transforming education through the use of [Quality](#) learning practices. Quality learning is about the continual improvement of all learners in the system and redesigning learning environments to increase engagement, encourage collaboration, and improve achievement. Urbandale schools relentlessly and passionately implement programs that support the district’s mission to teach all and to reach all. It is through the implementation of innovative programs, much like the Special Education Program at UHS, that students learn to not only face their challenges, but embrace them in order to overcome obstacles and achieve their full potential.

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. For more information on Rotary International, visit www.rotary.org

About Urbandale Community School District

The Urbandale Community School District includes portions of Des Moines and Urbandale, Iowa. The district serves over 3,800 students in six elementary schools, one middle school, and one comprehensive high school. The Urbandale district supports an increasingly diverse student population where 50 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](#) tools and tactics 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 life-long learners and is a school district that brings learning to life for everyone. To learn more, visit: www.urbandaleschools.com

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