

## KBE Good News Items: December 2, 2020

### **Dishman McGinnis Elementary (BGID) as Kentucky's Representative for the White House Holiday Tree: Patrice McCrary**

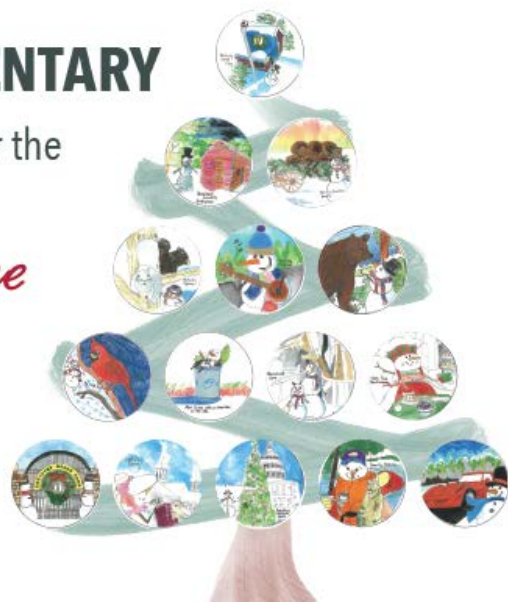
The Kentucky Department of Education selected Dishman McGinnis Elementary (Bowling Green Independent) to represent the Commonwealth in the 2020 National Christmas Tree display. Dishman McGinnis joins 56 other schools across the country in creating one-of-a-kind ornaments for the national Christmas tree display on the Ellipse in President's Park in front of the White House.

The ornaments will adorn 56 smaller trees that surround the National Christmas Tree, which represents each U.S. state, territory and the District of Columbia as part of the America Celebrates display. Mary Sansom, Bowling Green Independent itinerant elementary art teacher, said her visual art students created a collection of 12 unique images of snowmen and women enjoying the best Kentucky has to offer.

## **DISHMAN MCGINNIS ELEMENTARY**

of Bowling Green Independent selected for the

*National Christmas Tree*



The ornament design process began with Dishman McGinnis Elementary 4th- and 5<sup>th</sup>-grade visual art students researching images of iconic Kentucky landmarks, historical sites and symbols. From there, students applied knowledge they had previously learned during a snowman drawing unit, where they learned how to draw snowmen from various points of view. The student's objective was to create a unique ornament design by combining an image of Kentucky with a snowman or woman of their choice.

The Kentucky Board of Education congratulates Dishman McGinnis Elementary for this achievement and honor.

### **2021 National Language Teacher of the Year (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)) - Elena Kamenetzky: Solyana Mesfin**



For the first time ever, a Kentucky teacher has been named National Language Teacher of the Year by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Elena Kamenetzky, a Japanese teacher at Eastern High School in Jefferson County, is the 2021 ACTFL award winner. Before winning the national award, Kamenetzky was named state award winner by the Kentucky World Language Association and regional award winner by the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT).

The Kentucky Board of Education thanks Ms. Kamentzky for her talent and dedication to students. Congratulations on winning this prestigious award.

### **One of the Nation's Top Youth Beekeepers by the North American Bayer Bee Care Program –Emma Stevens: Cody Pauley Johnson**

I would like to take this opportunity to share about Emma Stevens, who has been beekeeping for a little over a year and a half, yet she already has brought pride not only to Greenup County, but the whole Appalachian region. The 16-year-old junior at Greenup County High School recently was named one of the nation's top youth beekeepers by the North American Bayer Bee Care Program. The program aims to recognize the next generation of beekeepers and their efforts to give back to their communities through activities that support honey bee and pollinator health. Like many younger children in her district, Stevens used to be terrified of bees. Now, as the vice-president of Greenup County High School's FFA chapter, she is playing an instrumental role in fighting common misconceptions about bees in her community.

The Kentucky Board of Education congratulates Emma Stevens on her incredible accomplishment.



### **2020 Recognizing Inspirational School Employees (RISE) Award - Robert Walker and Shelly Thomas: Lt. Governor Jacqueline Coleman**

As I often do during media briefings, I want to share some exciting news I recently made in an announcement regarding the 2020 Recognizing Inspirational School Employees (RISE) Award. Robert Walker, a school safety and wellness coordinator in Harrison County, and Shelly Thomas, a family resource center coordinator in Barren County, were selected to represent Kentucky for the national award. The new award, which recognizes classified school employees who have displayed excellence in serving students, was passed by Congress and is overseen by the U.S. Department of Education (USED). Walker and Thomas' names have been forwarded to USED for consideration for the 2020 RISE Award. The national winner will be announced by the U.S. Secretary of Education in spring 2021. They also will receive the Kentucky 2020-2021 Education Support Staff Professional Award, which was created this year at the state level by Governor and me to recognize the state's classified school employees.

The Kentucky Board of Education, and the Governor and I, want to thank Mr. Walker and Ms. Thomas for their exception service to Kentucky's students.





## **A 40-Year Reunion in the Making - Pat Harkleroad and Ana Reyes: Lu Young**

You might have read about this story, but it's just too good not to share. Ana Reyes and her family immigrated to the United States when she was five years old. While she doesn't recall much from her life before her family was in the U.S., she does remember the difficulties of integrating into a new culture without knowing the language. After moving to Louisville in 1979, Reyes began her education at Wilder Elementary (Jefferson County). Reyes still was struggling with the language when she entered 1st grade. Her teacher vowed to help her learn so Reyes could catch up to the other students and came in early before the school day to assist. "That was life-changing," Reyes said. "To this day, I don't know how far behind I would have been if no one had done that."

By 4th grade, Reyes found herself in the gifted and talented program. She went on to graduate from Atherton High School's (Jefferson County) International Baccalaureate program and then Transylvania University in 1996. After taking a year off, she attended Harvard Law School and graduated in 2000. Then in 2014, she earned her master's in international public policy from Johns Hopkins University. Reyes is now co-head of the International Practice Disputes practice and a member of the Executive Committee at Williams & Connolly LLP, a law firm based in Washington, D.C.

With all of her accomplishments, Reyes often wondered whether her career would have been possible if someone had not spent that extra time to help her learn English. Over the years, she made efforts to contact the teacher who helped change her life, but couldn't find her because she couldn't remember the teacher's name. After she posted on Facebook asking for advice on where to begin, and one email and two days later, Reyes had a name, Pat Harkleroad, to go with the

memories. She would finally be able to thank the teacher who not only helped her learn the language, but also sent her down a lifelong path of volunteer work and helping other immigrants.

Harkleroad recalled that when Reyes walked into her classroom in 1980, she knew she needed to do something to help her catch up with the other students, but wasn't quite sure where to begin. With the approval of Reyes' mother, Lilliam Decastelli, Harkleroad began meeting with her early for one-on-one lessons. "Her mother brought her every morning and we met in the classroom before the rest of the children came," Harkleroad said. "Once I taught her a few words, I even got her started in our reading program. She caught on really, really fast. She was just like a little sponge. Everything that I handed out to her, the next day she would know."

Even though these lessons were outside of the typical workday, Harkleroad said she had no problem coming in early each day to assist Reyes. "That was my job to do that," she said. "I felt responsible for taking her into my room and helping her as much as I could and that's the reason I tutored her. I would have done anybody that way."

Even though Reyes has immense gratitude for the time and effort put in by Harkleroad, she credits Kentucky's public education system as a whole for where she is today. "Kentucky public school teachers have definitely shaped my life and shaped my ability to have the career I have," she said. "I just don't think it could have started off any better than the lessons and compassion that Mrs. Harkleroad gave."

With Thanksgiving just behind us, the Kentucky Board of Education would like to take this opportunity to thank not only Mrs. Harkleroad, but all of Kentucky's teachers, for the tireless efforts and steadfast dedication they exhibit day in and day out for our students.

