

Boulder Valley teachers awarded for excellence

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BOULDER, Colo. -

Hanging from the desk of Crest View Elementary School teacher Jeri Eurich is a poster that reads: "Believe in yourself."

It's a simple message she uses as part of the Intensive Center for Affective Needs, one of only three such classrooms in the Boulder Valley School District that caters to children with severe emotional disabilities.

For her 13 years serving the special-education students at Crest View and across the district, Eurich was among five Boulder Valley teachers on Tuesday who received awards for excellence in education from the Boulder-based nonprofit Impact on Education.

The winners - including Bear Creek Elementary School librarian Laurie Brockway, and teachers Devorah Dettloff of Arapahoe Ridge High, Sue Kidder of Gold Hill Elementary and Bill Smith of Douglass Elementary - were surprised at their schools with the awards. Each comes with a personal check for \$500 and a \$1,500 grant for the school.

"We just like to recognize outstanding educators in the school district," said Diana Lewis, of Impact on Education. "This is our way of making sure they know they're special."

The winners, who will be honored at a banquet April 16, were among a record 73 nominations Impact on Education received this year.

Crest View's Eurich, who has a master's degree in severe emotional needs, helps students with autism, bi-polar disorder and other cognitive and emotional disabilities learn to change their behaviors and integrate with the general student population.

She also trains and mentors peer mediators - students who learn to help resolve conflicts among their classmates.

"Even as a little kid, I always wanted to help kids that weren't treated fairly," Eurich said. "It's really about giving kids the tools and strategies to be positive and contributing members of the community."

She was nominated for the award by Harriet Edelstein, a social worker at Crest View and past recipient of the Impact on Education honor.

"She is a master teacher with a warm heart and an incredible ability to change children's behavior," Edelstein said of her longtime friend. "She's very beloved and a sweet, good person who really helps everyone."

Kim Bane, director of special education for the Boulder Valley School District, said Eurich "works miracles."

"It takes a special heart and special talent to be successful with such challenged children, Bane said. She said Eurich has an abundance of both.

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