

[Outstanding Educator of the Year]

Educator of the Year is a recognition of one of our educators in the area. It is not determined by their accomplishments, being published, or being recognized at the State level. It is a nomination of people who have changed your heart, given you longing for education, changed our education system or way of thinking to meet our student's needs, and engaged them at their level. Even assisting fellow educators so that the delivery of education can be done even during a Pandemic ... and this year's recipient has accomplished just that and more.

This educator worked tirelessly with the Oregon Department of Education and our local health department to ensure all kids were able to attend school daily during the 2019-2020 school year, she adhered to and exceeded all policies and practices that Covid brought on while continuing to take care of students, staff and families concerns and daily operations of the school. They put the student and their family's needs and education first continually throughout these past two years. She is always encouraging her students, families, and teachers to be good stewards of our community by being involved in service projects for The Dalles and various programs. Food Boxes, Meals on Wheels, clothing & diaper drives for St. Vincent de Paul, and clean-up days are just a few examples. They have even done hours of stuffing tourism brochures for our office when we were short-handed during a heavy tourism season. The kids had lots of fun and they learned a few things about The Dalles while they were working on the project!

This year has brought even more challenges than just adhering and keeping everyone safe. It also brought on a shortage in labor at all levels and in all industries including education. When a teacher left during the year and there wasn't anyone to fill the vacancy our nominee didn't think twice and returned to the classroom to teach 3rd graders while still fulfilling the duties of being principal. She is still currently co-teaching 3rd grade until the permanent hire is fully trained.

This principal doesn't just perform the administrative duties but is very active and involved in all the activities of their school and their number one priority is to make sure that St Marys' academy thrives, and that each student and teacher has what they need to be successful.

She continues to strive every day to make the world a better place by treating her school team and students like her own family.

Everyone, please help me congratulate **Kim Koch** as our 2021 Outstanding Educator of the Year.