

The Christopher S. Thompson Service Award



1923-2024

Description:

The Christopher S. Thompson Service Award is given in recognition of service to others and the community that goes above and beyond. The award honors those who commit themselves to service to others before themselves, and those who recognize a need and strive to respond. Named after Christopher S. Thompson, a community member, veteran, Commander with the American Legion, and partner with Marshall Middle School for 30 years, this award honors his lifetime of service to others. Since Marshall Middle School opened its doors in 1994, Mr. Thompson has been awarding the American Legion Award to a selected Girl and Boy. It is our hope this award will inspire others to do as Mr. Thompson did and selflessly serve others for the betterment of our world. [Rubric for selected candidates](#)

2023-24 Student Winner

- **Hannah Goetz**
 - During the pandemic, Hannah realized the importance of connection and found books helped her connect with the world around her. This SPARKED an idea to ensure all children had opportunities to connect with the world through books. Realizing that not all children had access to books, Hannah set off on a journey to collect books and give them to children who needed them. Working with Reading Ready, an organization in the city of Pittsburgh, Hannah collected over 1200 books. Once delivered to Reading Ready, over 400 children were provided up to three free books all collected by Hannah. For her commitment to others and selfless service to her community, it is our privilege to recognize Hannah as our first student recipient of the Christopher S. Thompson Service Award.

2023-24 Staff Winner

- **William Mascari**
 - Each day, Mr. Mascari seeks to add value to Marshall Middle School in a variety of ways. Whether through teaching students to speak another language, helping students gain an appreciation of various cultures, or organizing and supporting efforts to move Marshall Middle School forward through service. Mr. Mascari's contribution to our school is endless. We celebrate Mr. Mascari's efforts and commitment to Make A Wish as the sponsor of the MMS Make A Wish club. This club has granted a wish to a child in need for 8 out of the last 9 years (2020 being the only year a wish was not granted). Mr. Mascari's dedication to our students and serving others is seen each day and we continue to be beyond grateful he is a part of our Marshall Middle School Family.

2024-2025 Student Winner

- **Grace Spagnoli**
 - From a young age, Grace Spagnoli has consistently demonstrated a caring nature and the drive to help others.. Even at six years old, she chose to collect donations for Animal Friends instead of birthday gifts for herself.. Her dedication to helping others continues through her volunteer work at Candy Lane Acres, the stables where she has been riding since she was five. For the past four summers, Grace has also volunteered as a camp counselor at Candy Lane Acres. In this role, she shares her passion for horses by teaching younger children about their care and riding, as well as leading arts and crafts activities. However, Grace's most significant service initiative is her annual toy drive for UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Inspired by her own ten-day stay at the hospital in 2016, she has organized this drive every year since. She diligently distributes flyers and collects donations, aiming to bring some happiness to the children currently staying there, just as she experienced during her time as a patient. This past year was her best year ever at over 450 toys and those items collected were some of the only gifts that those children received.

2024-2025 Staff Winner

- **Mrs. Mastroianni and Mrs. Miele - along with Team B.**
 - Mrs. Mastroianni and Mrs. Miele have exemplified leadership and compassion through their outstanding service efforts at MMS. Over the past two years, with the support of their teammates Mrs. Laux, Mr. Schmitt, and Mrs. Zanella, they have raised nearly \$5,000 for Children's Hospital. Each year, they honor a student from the North Allegheny School District as a "hero" who has received care at the hospital, rallying the school community to raise funds and selecting a staff "sidekick" in their honor. This takes a special kind of attention to the needs of others—most notably children with a critical illness and their families who need to feel the love of a caring support system. Their work is the *quiet work* that each person should strive for during their lifetime. Their creative initiatives, including a spirited 7th-grade dodgeball tournament, have not only raised funds but also awareness. Beyond fundraising, they've assembled—using donated items from our generous school—thoughtful goody bags for Children's Hospital nurses, written letters to veterans, and assisted with service and fundraising efforts throughout our school. In recognition of their dedication and impact, Mrs. Mastroianni and Mrs. Miele are this year's well-deserving recipients of the Christopher S. Thompson Staff Service Award.

2025-2026 Staff Winners

- **Mrs. Guerrieri, Mrs. Cella, Ms. Rosenbauer, Ms. Zeh (Best Buddies)**
 - The Christopher S. Thompson Service Award recognizes those who go above and beyond in service to others—individuals who see a need, step forward, and consistently put others before themselves.

This year's recipients embody that spirit in a truly meaningful way.

Through their leadership and dedication to our MMS Buddies Club, Mrs. Guerrieri, Mrs. Cella, Ms. Rosenbauer, and Ms. Zeh have helped build something special in our school. What began as an opportunity for connection has grown each year into a thriving community that reflects the mission of Best Buddies International—a movement grounded in friendship, inclusion, and belonging for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Because of their commitment, students have not only formed meaningful friendships, but have also stepped into leadership roles, learned empathy, and grown into kind, compassionate humans. This club has become an essential part of our building—creating spaces where students connect in authentic ways, regardless of their differences.

The impact of their work extends far beyond meetings or events. It lives in the relationships built, the confidence gained, and the sense of belonging created for so many of our students.

Like Christopher S. Thompson, these educators serve not for recognition, but because they believe deeply in the power of community and the importance of lifting others up.

It is my honor to present the Christopher S. Thompson Service Award to Mrs. Guerrieri, Mrs. Cella, Ms. Rosenbauer, and Ms. Zeh for making our school a more connected, compassionate, and inclusive place for all.

- **Libby Haas**

- Libby was diagnosed with scoliosis earlier this school year. To stop the progression of her spinal curve, doctors suggested that she wear a scoliosis brace for 18 hours per day for possibly the next 2 years

.At her brace-fitting appointment, she learned about an organization called “higgy bears.” This organization is meant to give kids and teens who are going through scoliosis treatments a “friend” who is going through the same thing. However, this “friend” comes in teddy bear form! Higgy Bears are special bears that wear matching back braces or have scars down their backs for patients that have had surgery.

Libby’s mom ordered her a bear to help her feel less alone. Once Libby received her bear, not only did she feel seen and supported, but she also felt inspired to help others feel the same way.

Coincidentally, a fundraiser was beginning through higgy bears to raise money for kids and teens to receive bears. Libby joined the fundraiser and in just one short month she raised \$6845 which was enough for 568 cute little teddy bears with back braces. Libby even invited her closest friends to help assemble the bears!

She donated the bears between 2 local clinics in the Pittsburgh area that fit children for scoliosis braces. Now, anyone who leaves their brace-fitting appointment gets a new brace and a new higgy bear friend to help them feel supported!

Libby plans to remain involved in higgy bears by attending local “higgy meetups” and by possibly being on a teen panel at a future “higgy con.”