



Connecticut State Department of Education

September 2014 Update for District Contacts for Paraeducator Issues

Introducing our 2015 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year: Geraldine Lavallee from Simsbury Public Schools

Geraldine Lavallee is a Behavior Coach at Squadron Line Elementary School in Simsbury, CT. Geri began her career as a paraeducator in 1996, after 13 years of employment at CIGNA, where her job objectives progressed from being an administrative assistant to computer programmer and finally to Product Support Analyst.

As a Behavior Coach, Geri assists in the implementation of the Behavior Intervention Plan, including but not limited to: collecting and managing data, administering reinforcement/consequences and assisting in de-escalation strategies, teaching appropriate replacement behaviors, assisting in escorts and protective holds to ensure safety of students and monitoring behavior plans with fidelity. She is the only paraeducator on the School Climate committee and has presented multiple character education lessons to students across grade levels introducing strategies to combat bullying behaviors within the school environment.

Geri's work with students having difficulty, has earned her the respect of her colleagues: "Geri provides interventions in a manner that is respectful and dignified. The best part is how Geri is able to step back so quickly and allow the student the opportunity to gain valuable experience with other students and to develop skills to be more successful independently."

Geri is a valued member of the Squadron Line staff. A staff member at the schools says the following: "She has been an integral part of supporting the Squadron Line community in the delivery of the Shine Program, behavioral data collection, creating and using social stories, conducting research related to motor breaks, and curricula development. She frequently provides supports in the development and implementation of student behavior plans by creating social stories and iMovies, as well as visual schedules and picture communication systems to allow students to successfully participate in the school environment."

Geri has shown her commitment to professional growth by attending workshops outside of the regular school day. The Simsbury School District recognized her commitment and talent by asking her to attend a recent SERC Paraprofessionals as Partners Conference to present her learning to other district paraeducators.

As the 2015 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year, her message to other paraeducators is:

"As paraeducators, we are part of a team of people given the privilege and responsibility to guide and be advocates for students through their educational career. We learn from each other, and the students who cross our paths. These experiences allow us to assist the students in recognizing their strengths and accomplishments through independence and hard work. In a cooperative effort with teachers, we nurture strategies and critical thinking that will become lifelong and valuable skills in their success. Looking at the "whole" student helps us impart relevant knowledge to the learning process. The reward of seeing students succeed is priceless, and a gift that should be held close to our hearts. We should envision that success with every student. Paraeducators are a positive support to the learning environment. We do make a difference."

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The CSDE, National Resource Center for Paraeducators (NRCP) and the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council Local Arrangements Committee have officially begun the planning process for the 32nd Annual National Resource Center for Paraeducators Conference, April 16-18, 2015, at the Hilton Hartford Hotel. We are excited to announce that Friday, April 17, 2015, the keynote speaker will be Dr. George Sugai, Director, Center for Behavioral Education and Research (CBER) and the Center of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Please check the Conference page at: <http://www.nrpara.org/conference> for updated information including; Call for Papers and Exhibitor Application Form. Please note early bird registration for the conference ends on November 28. Register early to take advantage of discounts: <http://www.nrpara.org/conference/registration>.

A special thank you to the following members of the Local Arrangements Committee who are planning the logistics for the conference:

Anthony Brisson
Consultant, State Education Resource Center (SERC)

Mary Beth Bruder, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Research Education Services

Georgina Cabrera, 2014 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year
Wallingford Public Schools

Marcia Cattanch
Paraeducator, Hartford Public Schools

Heather Dawes
Education Services Specialist, SERC

Rhonda Kempton
Education Consultant, CSDE

Annie MacDonald
Field Organizer, United Electrical Workers, Radio and Machine Workers

Donna Morelli
Consultant, Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)

Christine Sullivan
Graduate Assistant, Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Research Education Services

Iris White
Education Consultant, CSDE

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