



Amherst Massachusetts

A m h e r s t H u m a n R i g h t s C o m m i s s i o n

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June 2, 2015

Dear Human Rights Hero!

On behalf of the Town of Amherst Human Rights Commission, I am delighted to notify you of your nomination and selection as one of this year's Human Rights Heroes award recipients. Each year for 11 years, the Human Rights Commission has celebrated the achievements of Amherst area young people who have shown an ability to love and care for one another through demonstrated acts of kindness, unselfishness, social courage and/or community service within their families, their schools, or the community. Nominations are invited by educators and community members who have observed young people engaged in the display of one or more of these traits in the past year.

This year, you were caught in the act!

The Commission is presenting awards to ten of this year's recipients at its annual community picnic on Sunday, June 14, 2015 at the Mill River Recreation Area, 95 Montague Road in Amherst . The picnic is from 12-2pm and we are hoping that you will come with your family, eat some traditional picnic fare, and let us tell the world a little about your acts of heroism. The person who nominated you is also being invited to the picnic.

Please let me know by Thursday June 11, 2015 what time you can join us on Sunday, June 14 or if you need to receive your award at another time. and Congratulations on being a Human Rights Hero!

Sincerely,

Deborah Radway
Director of Human Resources & Human Rights
TOWN OF AMHERST

Crocker Farm Elementary School Students

Khalila Lord-Arond, 6th grade

Yabanex Toro-Rodriguez 6th grade

Kouta Ueki, 2nd grade

Lauren Joy 3rd grade.

The Amherst Human Rights Commission presents a Human Rights Hero Award to Crocker Farm School students Khalila Lord-Arond, Yabanex Toro-Rodriguez, Kouta Ueki and Lauren Joy. These students were nominated by one of their teachers, who said they all show great empathy for others, especially for those who are often left out. Their ability to work and play with anyone in their classes was specifically identified as an admirable character trait. They often offer to be partners and help out students who have no other friends in the school. They embrace others regardless race, socio economic status, only regarding other's needs. As the Human Rights Commission seeks to find individuals who promote mutual respect amongst their peers and honor the diversity within our community, these 4 students stand out as remarkable and admirable example of how these qualities and actions can create real and lasting good in the lives of those around us. The Commission knows that Khalila, Yabanex, Kouta and Lauren will continue to grow into the kind of people we need more of: individuals of integrity, courage, and compassion. We recognize their kind, gentle spirits and understanding of the true meaning of friendship.

Pelham Elementary School 4th grade class

18 members: Aidan Bergeron Dresser; Destiny Brown; Jaeden Case; Max Frenette; Jacob Furtaw; Bea Gould; Taylor Hanson; Nate Hawkins; Calvin Jackowitz, Walter Lloyd; Charlie May; Bevin Montgomery Gehrt; Max Rogowski; Ryan Rogowski; Sadie Rogowski; Ari Romero Gonzalez; Skylar Thompson; Ethan Watson.

The Amherst Human Rights Commission presents a Human Rights Hero Award to the 4th grade class at Pelham Elementary School. As 3rd graders, this group of students received a class award for putting on a “state fair” in June, 2014. They got to choose their reward for winning, and instead of selecting the usual movie and popcorn event, they chose to run a school wide food drive for the Amherst Survival Center. They created a plan and it became a major community service project. The class identified and set up teams to monitor and accomplish the goal. They collected and delivered 598 pounds of food. The Survival Center was so impressed they posted the project on their website for other schools to replicate. They created a template called Helping Others by Running a Successful School Food Drive. These students are kind hearted, and they always helped,

encouraged, congratulated and cheered each other up during their work. They are the gold standard of caring young people, and we salute them.

Celia Malone

The Amherst Human Rights Commission presents a Human Rights Hero Award to Celia Malone, completing 6th grade at Fort River Elementary School. According to her nominator, Celia is consistently a positive social force in the Fort River School community. She stands up for what is right. Whether she is making sure to include others in games at recess, standing up to bullying behavior, or simply being a loyal friend, Celia's positive actions have a major impact on those around her. Celia is a member of the Fort River Student Council. She brings a mature perspective to the group's discussions. Celia articulates a sophisticated comprehension of student identity issues and how these might factors affect students in their day-to-day activities at school. She is always very thoughtful and considerate of others' perspectives, especially those of students and families who may not have the resources that others have. Celia is inclusive of others, including peers who don't seem to hold the same social awareness. She maintains her values but not at the expense of others. She truly exemplifies what it means to be a Student Leader.

Seo-Ho Lee

The Amherst Human Rights Commission presents a Human Rights Hero Award to Seo-Ho Lee, completing 6th grade at Fort River Elementary School. Seo-Ho makes so many positive contributions to the community at Fort River School. She and her family were new to Amherst this fall and Seo-Ho made numerous connections almost immediately. She has an uncanny ability for picking up on the positive things that she sees her classmates doing and making sure they are recognized. Seo-Ho often goes out of her way to help others.

Seo-Ho has also come into her own as an activist this year. While researching an article she was writing in Language Arts about teen activists who are fighting racism, Seo-Ho became inspired to take action herself. She asked what else an anti-racism activist might do beyond protest or march. Seo-Ho decided to invite a panel of guest speakers to talk to the 6th grade about racism and what kids can do about it. In early April the event happened and produced valuable discussion amongst the students on an issue that has been widely talked on both the local and national level. Seo-Ho's excitement about the issues she cares about is truly infectious, as many of her peers have started to express interest in getting involved as well. Fort River, Amherst and society in general need more students like Seo-Ho Lee who not only have a deeply held appreciation for those around them, but are also willing to take a critical eye to the problems they see in our society and do something about them.

Noreen Swan:

The Amherst Human Rights Commission presents a Human Rights Hero Award to Noreen Swan, incoming senior at ARHS. Noreen has been a tireless planner and participant in mentoring and community outreach activities. Noreen has supported the 5th grade mentoring program this year, supported efforts to bring dialogue to the community, helped write a PGO grant for the community teach-in project this spring, and worked with her peers with selflessness, a collaborative spirit and a social courage. Noreen is also a member of the Intergenerational Group led by Anastasia Morton, another group working to raise awareness and bring more social justice awareness to our community.

Sajo Jefferson

The Amherst Human Rights Commission presents a Human Rights Hero Award to Sajo Jefferson, a 2015 ARHS graduate. Sajo has worked tirelessly to promote human rights in Amherst Regional High School through her anti-racism work. Following the Ferguson and Staten Island grand jury decisions, she helped lead a walkout-dialogue where 330 students, nearly one third of the student body, walked to the Jones Library to participate in a dialogue about the grand jury decisions, and racism on an interpersonal and institutional levels.

Sajo kept busy with many different initiatives during the school year, founding and leading the ARHS chapter of Black Lives Matter, the 24th in the country; starting a new book club, focusing on race and racism in America. Sajo organized teach ins- recruiting outside speakers to ARHS including Mtali Banda, a local activist, and Tricia Rose, a professor at Brown University this spring. As a junior Sajo cofounded an interracial dialogue club DOHSON (Daughters of Harriet, Sons of Harriet) which has remained active throughout her senior year. The club meets bi-weekly and talks about a variety of topics concerning race and racism. The Commission appreciates the work that Sajo has already done and encourages her to keep it up!

Larenz Harris

The Amherst Human Rights Commission presents a Human Rights Hero Award to Larenz Harris, a 2015 ARHS graduate. Larenz has been a longtime member of MSAN Scholars, and has been one of the most effective student leaders in the mentoring programs, both in past years with STRIVE, the middle school program, and this year with CTA, the 5th grade mentoring program. He is not only one of the most committed MSAN members, but a leader in showing kindness, support, and enthusiasm to younger students about social justice issues. Larenz is also a member of the Intergenerational Group led by Anastasia Morton, another group working to raise awareness and bring more social justice awareness to our community, as well as POCU, a student group who supports a yearly food drive and serve an integral role at the annual Dr. King community breakfast.

Shekenah Rocke

The Amherst Human Rights Commission presents a Human Rights Hero Award to Shekenah Rocke, a 2015 ARHS graduate. Shekenah is also an MSAN Scholar and has

shown commitment and a desire to growth in her leadership abilities with her peers and with the mentoring program. She has shown kindness, a collaborative spirit, and a commitment to demonstrating the strengths of social justice work within our school and our community. Shekenah is also a member of the Intergenerational Group led by Anastasia Morton, another group working to raise awareness and bring more social justice awareness to our community, as well as POCU, a student group who supports a yearly food drive and serve an integral role at the annual Dr. King community breakfast.

Liam Brodigan

The Amherst Human Rights Commission presents a Human Rights Hero Award to Liam Brodigan, 2015 graduate of ARHS. Liam has served on the Amherst Human Rights Commission for 3 years. His commitment to humanity is genuine and undeniable. As commissioner, Liam has consistently demonstrated a high-level of organization and motivation. He is a remarkable collaborator and his ability to communicate amongst a wide diversity of commission and community members is highly impressive. He is open-minded, enthusiastic and kindhearted. As a member of an intergenerational equity group that develops student leadership and promotes student voice, Liam exhibits incredible compassion, as well as a natural ability to listen to and connect with his peers. He is known to offer meaningful insight and make profound contributions to group discussions. Liam is simply a lovely person with a great sense of humor. He has been an incredible asset to our community and has tremendous potential as a future leader. The Commission will miss him!