

Heart Award: Compassion for all leads Austin to heartwarming success

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

From working with students who are struggling academically to mentoring fellow teachers, Mary Austin's compassion is evident on a daily basis at Holyoke Elementary School.

With sincere respect and appreciation for the care and concern Austin demonstrates for her students and fellow educators, four colleagues nominated her for the Heart Award in the 2013 Emerald Awards program.

"Mary truly has a heart for her students and a heart for those she works with," said Lynn Schneider. "Specifically, Mary is in the business of making a difference in the lives of others," added Kimberlee Bennett.

"A priority for Mary is a student's well-being and education," said the nomination letter from Cathy Sullivan and Yesenia Bencomo. "She is a natural mentor whose door is always open," they added.

Austin has served as Title I teacher at Holyoke Elementary for the past four years but was in the kindergarten classroom for 14 years prior to that.

Her love of her young students was so evident in her kindergarten classroom as she helped ease the transition in to the school setting for so many young ones.

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