

# Unity Award Recipients

- 2017 -

## The “Together Against Bullying” Award

*Awarded for taking action to prevent and change an attitude or behavior that physically or emotionally hurts, harms, or humiliates someone.*



### **Bay City Central Anti-Bullying Pledge Club**

“The Bay City Central Anti-Bullying Pledge Club does many things around the community, such as working on implementing PACER’s We Will Generation curriculum in its area schools, presenting an assembly to local schools, and helping others in their times of desperate need. They are working on getting funding in other schools in the state of Michigan to have this type of program. Thanks to this club, the culture at Bay City Central High School has changed drastically over the years. They are assisting its Special Olympics Michigan Chapter, Unified Champions, with their “End the R-word Week.”

The Bay City Central Anti-Bullying Pledge Club not only looks for ways to prevent bullying in our school, but we also hold assemblies at our area schools. This year’s school show is called “We Are Hopeful.” Our club has presented in front of 80 transport directors across the State of Michigan. We have also spoken to many middle and high schools across the Great Lakes Bay Region.” – *Nominated by an educator*

## The “United for Kindness” Award

*Awarded for demonstrating outstanding act(s) of being helpful to others.*



### **Colebrook Academy Key Club**

“Colebrook Academy Key Club has accomplished an average of more than 60 hours per member of community service in the last year. At the beginning of the school year, they had 20 members, and now they have 27. The students have trick-or-treated for UNICEF (donating \$100), made parts for shoes through Soles for Hope, raised money for Pennies for Patients, raised funds to give 10 families holiday meals, bought gifts for a boy who wouldn't have had a Christmas, cleaned up Beaver Brook Falls (a local park), helped with a STEM project at the elementary school, helped fellow students raise money to

go to Key Leader (a leadership training for teenagers), participated in “New Hampshire RESPECT Week” (taught about unhealthy and unhealthy relationships to their peers), and more!” *Watch their acceptance video [here](#).*

## The “United for Acceptance” Award

*Awarded for looking beyond the differences of others and celebrating what makes each person unique.*

### **Bethany Piotter**

“Bethany Piotter, a sophomore at the University of Northern Iowa has always been a huge fan of making people feel like they aren't alone. This school year, however, she made her biggest step yet.

Bethany created an inclusive group on UNI's campus. She is now the president of the group, UNIted Dance Company. This company is made up of multiple college students, each paired with a child from the community – some with and some without disabilities. She felt it necessary to include ALL kids, as not to make anyone feel different.

Bethany works hard to use kind words and loving mannerisms – even throughout the chaos of trying to teach dance with so many energetic children. She is also an elementary special education major at UNI, and plans to spend her entire lifetime working on inclusiveness. She is still so young, and such an amazing and deserving advocate who has already made such big strides.” – *Nominated by another student*

## The “United for Inclusion” Award

*Awarded for outstanding acts to help others feel like they belong and know that they aren't alone.*

### **John Schulzetenberg**

“During my weekly morning meetings with this student's mother, she often shares kind stories about her son engaging in outstanding behaviors that warm my heart. I have never met this child formerly, but the stories that I hear about bravery, kindness, insight, empathy, and values are impressive. One morning, his mother shared a particular story about her son standing by a peer in the lunchroom when he was being ostracized by a group of John's own friends. John continued to sit with a peer in the lunchroom while his own friend group actively tried to get him to abandon this other child. John was able to be assertive and withstand the peer pressure of his friends trying to influence him to alienate another child. John, when speaking to his mother, stated, "I could never do that to someone." John demonstrated outstanding moral character and kindness toward others in general, but his desire to make someone being excluded feel included is commendable.” – *Nominated by an educator*

## The Faces of Change Award

*Awarded to individuals and groups for outstanding acts to make a difference in our community, nominated by PACER's Youth Advisory Boards in Minnesota and California*



### **Elaina Leitzke**

“Elaina was concerned about the attitudes and behaviors of staff and students towards students with disabilities in her school. She had heard stereotypical comments made about deaf and blind individuals come from staff members, and wanted to make them aware of how these comments would affect those with disabilities, as well as the attitudes of other students and staff towards those with disabilities. As a result, she approached the school principal and suggested sensitivity training for staff. She also initiated a peer advocacy/mentoring group in the school, which is made up of students with and without disabilities. She is a role model and leader for kindness, inclusion, and acceptance in her school and community. Her actions also demonstrate a commitment to

finding solutions and building bridges between community members.” – *Nominated by PACER's Youth Advisory, Minnesota*

### **Watertown Mayer Middle School**

“A group of middle school students from Watertown-Mayer, Minn., directly contributed to creating a positive school climate by sharing their thoughts, opinions, and perspectives on how they view bullying behavior within their school and online community. These sixth, seventh, and eighth graders were invited to participate in a focus group to represent their peers and share their views on questions such as “What does bullying look like at their school?” or “What impact does bullying have on students?” They were also asked to share ideas on how their school — including incorporating student participation — can help to address and prevent bullying. The students enthusiastically shared articulate, insightful, and perceptive responses, providing educators and administrators with a unique perspective into the student experience. Their willingness and courage helped guide school personnel with information that was thoughtful, authentic, and candid. It was used as a catalyst to develop effective, student-relevant solutions on how bullying will be addressed at their school. We celebrate these students along with the educators who supported them during the process. Together they are building a school climate in which everyone feels valued and respected.” – *Nominated by PACER’s Youth Advisory, Minnesota*

### **Wayzata High School Unified Physical Education**

“Wayzata High School is currently piloting a class titled Unified Physical Education that brings together students with and without disabilities in a physical education setting focusing on physical, relational, and health topics. This class is making a huge impact, not only for the students in the class, but also for school communities. Inclusion is such a powerful concept and this is a great way to foster more of it!” – *Nominated by PACER’s Youth Advisory, Minnesota*

### **Mentors and Protectors at Burton Tech High School**

“This group has worked all year on bullying prevention – every week, during four class periods each week. They created a program called “Bullying Bootcamp,” writing all the lessons and activities, and have gone into their homerooms across the entire school to raise awareness about bullying. They also did a school-wide celebration on Unity Day last October that had more than 300 people, including invited guests and local elected officials. Aided by their teacher, Allison Levine, they are now reviewing their entire year so they can do it again next year! They will begin by teaching the incoming freshman class a week of “Bullying Bootcamp” this summer and continue on into the new school year. They are amazing and they should get some recognition.” – *Nominated by PACER’s Youth Advisory, California*



### **Marveon Mabon**

“Marveon was recently voted “Youth of the Month” in his housing project because of his desire for positive change. Everyone looks up to him as a leader. Because of his influence with his peers, he has decided to take on bullying prevention as his special project at school, distributing materials and spreading awareness throughout his school community and neighborhood. He is also active in student government.”

– *Nominated by PACER’s Youth Advisory, California*