



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EPISCOPAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNOUNCES THE 2021 ACHIEVE AWARDS WINNERS

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., October 25, 2021 - Episcopal Children's Services (ECS) is honored to announce the 2021 Achieve Awards winners, a celebration of excellence by teachers, staff members, parents and community partners who work with our Head Start and Early Head Start children and families. These awards are nominated and voted on by colleagues who work alongside the winners every day. The agency is pleased to recognize the following individuals in several categories of excellence:

Head Start Teachers of the Year

North Florida: **Sally Register** – Sally gets creative teaching her children the alphabet and changes her environments every week to match her lesson plans.

Alachua: **Ruth McCullars** – Ruth goes above and beyond to make sure that the children in her classroom are learning and having fun while doing it. She loves to see her children grow and develop their skills.

Central Florida: **Janet Owens** – Janet's excitement and love of learning is obvious in her students' enthusiasm in participating in the lessons she provides.

Lake: **Kimetra Johnson** – Kimetra has demonstrated a commitment to working with high-risk, high-need children and meeting the children where they are.

Early Head Start Teachers of the Year

Duval: **Tameshia Crockett** – Tameshia is encouraging and builds relationships with her families. She inspires her students daily and takes the time to demonstrate lessons multiple ways so the children can grasp the concepts.

Alachua: **Mirrian Douglas** – With an ever-present smile, Mirrian has created an engaging environment for all children, and she selflessly assists her co-teacher so the students can learn and grow.

Lake: **Sherie Hayes** – While demonstrating patience and persistence with her students, Sherie shows each one the perfect balance of structure and love.

Central Florida: **Latonia Handy** – A passionate teacher, Latonia took on the challenge of teaching virtually and implemented creative ways to keep her students engaged this year.

Leadership Staff Members of the Year

Jamila Green – Jamila took on her challenging role of overseeing our health services during a global pandemic with initiative and great success because her love for the work is inspiring.

Brittney Spangler - A compassionate listener and effective problem solver, Brittney oversees the School Readiness and VPK departments' daily operations with dedication and commitment to high quality.

ECS Staff Member of the Year

Brandi Harrison – Brandi is a creative team player and goes out of her way to help the families we serve as well as her colleagues.

HS/EHS Support Staff Member of the Year

Maria Reyes – Maria helped implement the new COVID-19 procedures with a smile and served as a Spanish-speaking interpreter for our families.

School Readiness CoachJax! Coach of the Year

Leslie Albrektson – Leslie is extremely creative and strives to develop new and innovative ideas to model, observe, and communicate with her providers, which in turn, leads to positive changes in teacher/child interactions.

Volunteers of the Year

National Health Corporation, Florida AmeriCorps Program – As virtual volunteers, they created fun and informative videos for our families including arts and crafts, hand washing, reading and dancing.

Jersey College School of Nursing – Since 2016, they have interned in North Florida assisting with health checks, mealtimes and more.

Parents of the Year

Alachua: **Barbara and Jimmie Walker** – Great grandparents to seven children, Barbara and Jimmie are compassionate and generous with their time and love.

Duval: **Shayla Baker** – Shayla is a very faithful and mindful person; she lives what she believes, and she promotes good character. She is involved in multiple ways at our center, including putting together the newsletter, assisting with parent trainings and keeping inventory of center supplies.

North Florida: **Melinda Littles** – A second generation ECS parent, Melinda assists with recruitment and community donations.

Central Florida: **Nicole Mozell** – Nicole is an active volunteer in the classroom and started a food donation program at our center to support our families.

Lake: **Eric Mossovitz** – A male role model for consistency and perseverance, Eric has overcome personal hardships to maintain a stable home for his children and is very involved in center activities.

Child Care Partners of the Year

Central Florida: **Clyatt House Learning Center** – Clyatt House's commitment to quality is seen in every aspect of their center-with a warm and welcoming atmosphere, children engaged in learning with fun and exciting activities.

Alachua: **Just a Blessing** – Families love the center atmosphere at Just a Blessing as it creates a wonderful space where they can engage with their child's learning.

Best CLASS Scores

Mrs. Vanessa Learning Lodge Inc. – With a warm and inviting atmosphere, students feel nurtured and important at Mrs. Vanessa Learning Lodge.

Allen Family Child Care Home - The teachers at Allen Family Child Care Home provide a strong and loving learning environment that has resulted in students who are enthusiastic and eager to learn.

Little Temples Learning Center – Greatly improving their CLASS scores over the past two years, the Little Temples team is committed to providing high quality education and enthusiastically collaborates with our coach.

“Words cannot adequately convey the gratitude myself and our entire team feels for these individual's commitment to ensuring every child we serve has a strong start in life,” stated ECS CEO Connie Stophel. “Our agency's greatest asset is our team, and it is exciting and humbling to celebrate our work family.”

Since 2019, the Episcopal Children's Services Achieve Awards has provided the opportunity for the agency to celebrate the best among its many programs and services in 14 counties throughout North and Central Florida. The awards are meaningful to all who are nominated but even more significant to the agency over the past year with the entire staff's dedication to the mission throughout the global pandemic.

About Episcopal Children's Services

Episcopal Children's Services serves more than 25,000 children and their families in 14 counties in Florida. ECS offers School Readiness, Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Baker, Bradford, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Marion, Dixie, Gilchrist, Lake, Levy, Citrus and Alachua counties.

ECS uses research and best practices to help families ensure their children enter school ready to learn. Talented, dedicated teachers and staff work proactively with children from birth to age five and their families to build a strong educational foundation.

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