

NSA Hampton Roads wins A+ Community Partner Awards

By Katisha Draughn, Naval Support Activity Hampton Roads Public Affairs

Naval Support Activity Hampton Roads (NSA HR) was honored for their partnerships with local schools at the 5th annual Together in Education (TIE) Awards Gala at the Waterside Marriott, Nov. 2.

The TIE Awards serves as the Norfolk Education Foundation's (NEF) premier annual event to recognize individual(s) who have made a significant contribution to the success of the Norfolk Public School system. NEF presents the A+ Community Partner Awards to recognize partnerships between schools, businesses and community organizations in the following categories: Rookie Achievement, Innovative Achievement, Collaborative, Tutoring, Mentoring and the coveted Summa Cum Laude Award. The TIE Gala attracted approximately 400 attendees including: Mayor Paul D. Fraim, City of Norfolk; Dr. Richard Bentley, the superintendent of Norfolk Public Schools; and various other political, military and business leaders and school board members.

NSA HR won the Rookie Achievement Award for their partnership with Sewells Point Elementary School and Northside Middle School and won the Innovative Award for their partnership with Camp Allen Elementary School.

"It is such an honor to be recognized for the work our School Liaison Officer (SLO) and the Sailors have put in with our local schools," said Capt. Charles Melcher, Commanding Officer of NSA HR. "My SLO, Sailors and staff have selflessly given their time to support these schools and we hope to continue these relationships."

The Rookie Achievement Award is given for a new partnership that has exhibited exemplary achievement in one or more of the other award categories. NSA HR's two-year partnership with Sewells Point Elementary School and their year-long partnership with Northside Middle School have proven to be very valuable for the students, parents and the military community as a whole.

At Sewells Point Elementary School, Melcher and Allison Foster, Ph.D., School Liaison Officer, NSA HR have been speakers at the Back-to-School nights and Career Day events and have urged the parents to continue to be involved with the school. Foster has provided resources to the guidance counselor to support military children whose parents are deployed and interacts with the school on behalf of individual students of military members. She works to ensure a smooth

transition of students between schools and cross credit validation between systems and issues arising from the deployments of service members. Additionally, NSA Sailors participated in the school's field day event supporting the large military dependent population.

At Northside Middle School, approximately 50 Sailors and 10 Marines spent two days cutting the grass, raking leaves, scraping the parking lots, spreading mulch, cleaning the gutters and the flood drains, cleaning the athletic field to beautify the exterior of the school and collecting 350 55-gallon trash bags of yard waste. The principal was very appreciative of the work they did and subsequently invited them to assist with the school's field day. The Sailors played soccer, basketball, tug-of-war and kickball with the students.

"It was a great opportunity for us to interact with the students, particularly since many of them are children of deployed parents," said Melcher.

NSA HR's work with Camp Allen Elementary School earned them the Innovative Award, which is a partnership that utilizes an "out of the box" concept that greatly impacts student achievement and significantly helps the school to achieve its goals and objectives.

"Military children on average experience nine moves in their educational careers. Obstacles which may occur include enrollment, placement, eligibility and graduation," said Foster. "School Liaison officers are the commanding Officer's educational expert on educational issues for military children. Working with local school systems to promote understanding of the challenges of military life can lessen some of the burdens families face."