

NEWS

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AASL honors the "best of the best" in the school library media community

CHICAGO – The American Association of School Librarians has announced the winners of the 2009 National School Library Media Program of the Year (NSLMPY) award. Livonia Central School District, Robert E. Clow Elementary School and Blue Valley North High School will be honored with this prestigious award at the AASL Awards Luncheon during the ALA 2009 Annual Conference in Chicago.

District honors for 2009 go to Livonia Central School District in Livonia, N.Y. The district is composed of four schools – two elementary, one middle and one secondary – situated on a 180-acre campus. With one full-time school library media specialist and one full-time certified teaching assistant at each of the buildings, the library media program creates a physical and digital hub for learning. In her application, Jody Duggan-Lay said, "The Livonia Central School is a community of learners where all – including faculty and staff – will develop multiple literacies, including informational, technical, digital, visual and textual."

Livonia Central's library media department employs a comprehensive program that focuses on teaching students the skills they need to be successful in each grade and beyond. From pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade, students and teachers and the surrounding community are provided a welcome atmosphere to use the library's resources. The department hosts community events such as book fairs, community youth groups, parent presentations and faculty and committee meetings. After hours workshops provide faculty with the opportunity to learn new technologies and participate in collaborative curriculum development. In his letter of support, Scott Bischooping, superintendent of schools, said, "[The Library Media Department's] focus on student and teacher needs along with skill development creates a culture of trust and support...Their results have made them a key component of the Livonia District that would be difficult to lose or replace."

Robert E. Clow Elementary School (Clow), located in Naperville, Ill, is a K-5 school with 453 students. Clow's library media center is truly the hub of the school. Throughout the day students can be seen sprawling with magazines in the open areas of the center, gathering for the monthly update on new opportunities available in the center or taking advantage of the technologies available to them. Flexible scheduling enables students to access the library media center and take part in many extracurricular activities, such as book club, storytelling and the Webographer program, which allows first- through fifth-graders to photo-document learning and teaching at Clow. Programming in the library media center also includes collaborative planning and teaching, technology initiatives, monthly updates called "What's Up in the LMC" and strong book and resource collections.

In her application, Library Media Center Director Beverly Frett, stated, "In the library media center, students grow socially and emotionally as they learn to think about the world around them, reflect on their place in it and relate their actions to their community both locally and globally." Frett hopes that in the long term Clow will continue to be a leader in the use of technology in the district. She would like to see Clow "push the evolution of technology use at the elementary level."

The additional single school award goes to Blue Valley North (BVN) High School in Overland Park, Kan. BVN, a Blue Ribbon Award school, is home to 1,495 students. In his statement of support, Dr. Carter L. Burns, Jr., principal, said, "The library media specialists are leaders in the school, teaching staff development courses, serving on district committees, collaborating with teachers to design, implement and evaluate lessons and going above and beyond to increase student achievement."

According to Abby Neiburger and Terri Snethen, the BVN's library media specialists, the library media center is the "school's largest classroom." The two full-time library media specialists offer students an academic atmosphere where they can access a wide variety of resources for research, read, study and use one of the many technologies available to them. Constantly changing, the library media center's Web site offers access to research databases, the school newspaper and the opportunity to contact a librarian through the "Ask a Librarian" feature. Long-range goals of BVN include furthering the implementation of 21st-century applications and promoting reading for information and pleasure.

"To all school library media specialists who think their programs top those mentioned above, I encourage you to apply for one of the 2010 NSLMPY award," said AASL President Ann M. Martin. "Not only do you do your school or district a disservice, but the entire school library media community by not showcasing your work and offering others an example of what their school or district should strive to be."

The AASL Awards Luncheon will be held from noon to 2 p.m. on Monday, July 13 during Annual Conference. The fee to attend is \$59. Special guest speaker for the luncheon will be Barbara Kerley, award-winning author of several books, including "Greetings from Planet Earth" and "What to do about Alice." For more information about this event and more AASL programs in Chicago, visit <http://www.ala.org/aasl/annual>.

Established in 1963, the NSLMPY Award honors school library media programs practicing their commitment to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information, as well as exemplifying implementation of Information Power. The award recognizes exemplary school library media programs that are fully integrated into the school's curriculum. Each winning program receives an obelisk – the symbol of school library excellence – and a \$10,000 prize donated by Follett Library Resources. Learn more about each of these school library media programs at <http://www.ala.org/aasl/awards>.

The American Association of School Librarians, www.aasl.org, a division of the American Library Association (ALA), promotes the improvement and extension of library media services in elementary and secondary schools as a means of strengthening the total education program. Its mission is to advocate excellence, facilitate change and develop leaders in the school library media field.