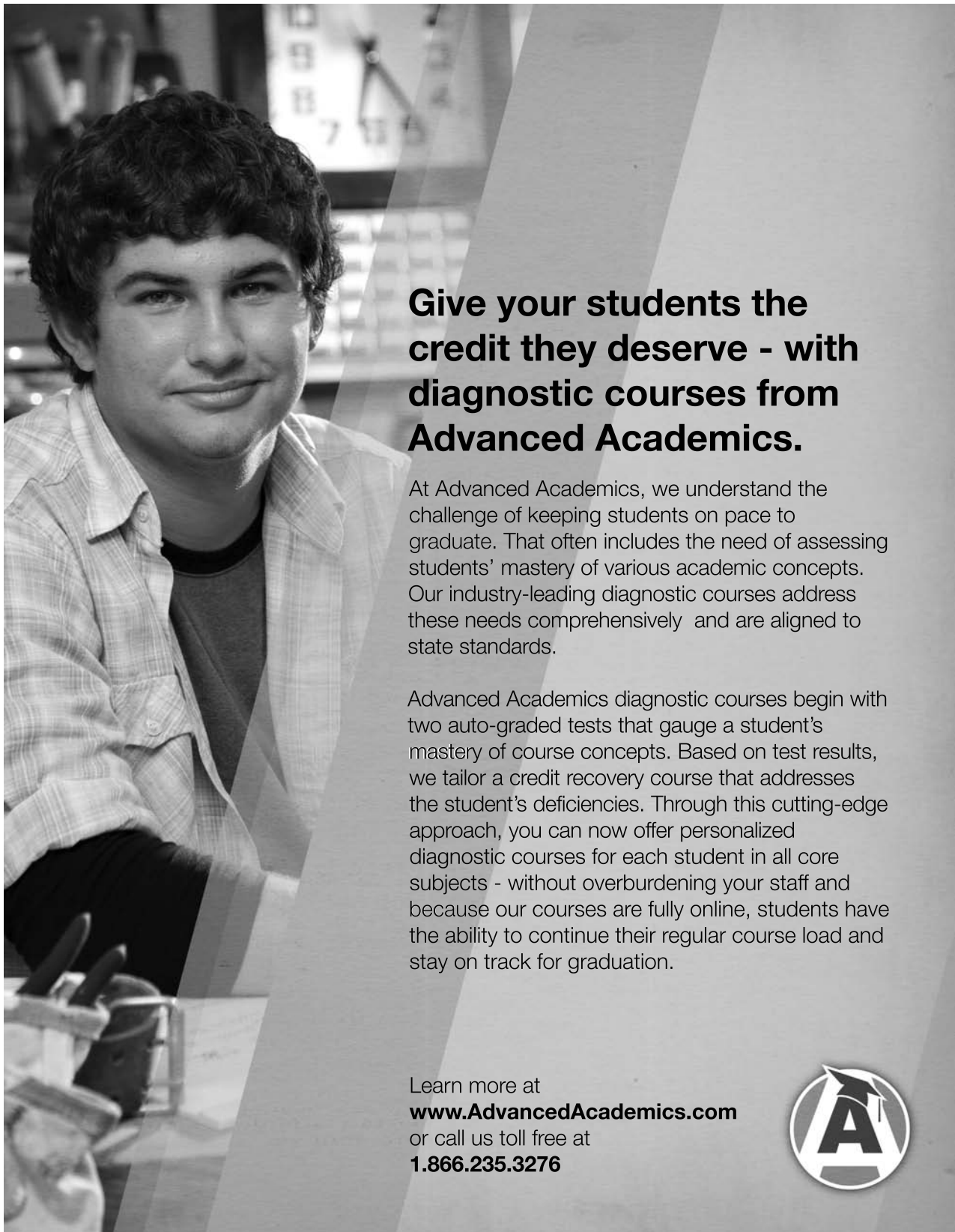




*2010 National
Dropout
Prevention
Network
Crystal Star
Awards
of
Excellence*

Many thanks to Advanced Academics, Inc. for sponsoring
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**2010 NDPN CRYSTAL STAR AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE
PROGRAM WINNER**

CONGRATULATIONS!

The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network salutes the individual and program winners of the National Dropout Prevention Network's Crystal Star Awards of Excellence in Dropout Recovery, Intervention, and Prevention.

THE OLYMPIA LEARNING CENTER

Columbia, SC



*Accepted by: Nathan White, Principal,
Olympia Learning Center*

Throughout the years, Olympia has tried to change the negative stigma associated with alternative school. Since the reformation of ideology in 2002, Olympia has changed the way Richland School District One works with those students, who because of various factors may not be served in a regular school setting. Two vital components in this approach are building relationships and providing opportunities for change.

The mission of the Olympia Learning Center is to provide opportunities for students to reach their maximum potential through diverse and innovative academic, career, support, and life skills programs in an alternative setting using non-traditional and challenging approaches that foster collaboration among staff, parents, post-secondary institutions, and community agencies. This is accomplished by creating a continuum of services that lead to permanent change. The Junior Success Program (Middle School) High School Program and the STAR Academy at Olympia Learning Center offer students an opportunity that leads to change in behavior, academia, and social etiquette. The Olympia Learning Center programs built its foundation by reminding students that success is not something that they have to watch from afar. Every time they master a concept, participate in the service learning projects, or work cooperatively for the good of their academic and personal communities, they experience success.

**2010 NDPN CRYSTAL STAR AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE
PROGRAM WINNERS**

**THE CHOCTAW ALTERNATIVE TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL (CATS)
Choctaw, OK**



Accepted by: Mrs. Dawn Eaves, Director

The Choctaw Alternative Transitional School (CATS) was founded in 1995, and serves approximately 120 high school students throughout the school year from Choctaw-Nicoma Park, Luther, and Jones School Districts. Students attend evening classes at Choctaw High School and participate in daytime learning such as career-tech, postsecondary concurrent enrollment, community service, and work-site learning. The program serves students who have not been successful in a traditional learning environment and provides them with opportunities to earn their high school diploma, gain self-esteem, and develop lifelong learning habits.

Our academy is a school of choice that has caring, dedicated, and professional educators. Each student participating in the program receives an individual plan to meet academic and graduation goals; a career-development plan of study; and a network of teachers, counselors, and workplace mentors to assist them in meeting their goals. The educational components that are included in our program are the keys to its success. With a self-paced and competency-driven curriculum, students must score 80 percent or better before advancing to the next unit within a course. The extensive use of individual counseling, life skills instruction, art education, work-based learning experiences, community service, and career-tech programs are also a vital part in the success. Students complete requirements for graduation and leave our program with life skills to become productive citizens. All of the students in the program are potential dropouts or dropout recovery students. This program has significantly and consistently helped keep the dropout rate for these schools below state average.

NORTH VISTA EDUCATION CENTER

Plymouth, MN

Intermediate District 287

RESPONSIVE. INNOVATIVE. SOLUTIONS.

*Accepted by: Lea Dahl, Principal and
Eric Michelsen, Program Facilitator, Area Learning Center,
Intermediate District 287*

North Vista Education Center (North Vista), a program of Intermediate District 287's Area Learning Center, located near North Minneapolis, opened its doors in 1984. Since that time, the program has successfully served hundreds of students who are pregnant and parenting and/or in need of developing basic skills and recovering high school credit. At North Vista secondary students can earn academic credits that meet the state requirements for graduation as well as participate in a work experience program. Special features of the program include parenting and life skills coursework for all students and tailored classes for English Language Learners.

North Vista supports pregnant and parenting students with a fully licensed onsite day care where parent-child specialists' care for children ages six weeks through preschool. The day care-Early Learning Center is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. In addition, a nurse is available to monitor the development of the pre and postnatal mothers and babies and to assist the parent(s) with health and safety issues. Funding for this program is provided in part by Hennepin County Community Services.

2010 NDPN CRYSTAL STAR AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE INDIVIDUAL WINNERS

CRAIG ZENO Houston, TX

Craig Zeno, is a Graduation Coach for the Houston Independent School District. He worked as a Dropout Prevention Specialist before accepting his current position in July of 2010, and served as a probation officer with the Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department. Prior to his employment with HISD, Zeno also held management positions at Neighborhood Centers, Inc. and Workforce Solutions.



As a Graduation Coach, Zeno counsels students in academics, career, and personal concerns in order to promote school completion. A former dropout himself, Zeno often uses his own experiences to help struggling students find hope in their lives, and to recognize the many opportunities for success that are still available to them.

Zeno has been featured in a number of local news stories and online articles for his work, including the *Wall Street Journal* (October 2008), the *Wall Street Journal: Classroom Edition* (January 2009), *The Story with Dick Gordon* (2008), *Grad Lab: New Weapon in Dropout Battle* (October 2010) *Former homeless dropout turns life around | abc13.com* (September 2010), *High School Dropouts Offered Alternative School Hours - KIAH* (September 2010), and *Grad Lab Boot Camp Gives Students a 2nd Chance* (August 2010).

A native Houstonian, Zeno attended Golfcrest Elementary School, Contemporary Learning Center, and Charles Milby High School. He earned a peace officer's license from the University of Houston-Downtown Police Academy and a bachelor's degree in the administration of justice from Texas Southern University.

BRENDA REEH North Las Vegas, NV



Mrs. Reeh was born in Houston, TX, and started school there in 1965. By the time she graduated from high school she had attended 13 different schools and still managed to be the class salutatorian. After one year at college she got married and 31 years, 4 children, and 6 grandchildren later she is still married. Mrs. Reeh returned to college when her youngest son went to kindergarten in 1993 and currently holds three degrees with the latest one an Ed.S in Leadership and Administration. She has lived in Texas, Utah, Idaho, Alaska, and now Nevada. Her four children and their families live within 10 miles of her home.

Brenda began working with high school dropouts approximately 15 years ago in Alaska. She would seek them out in places where they were trying to stay warm and bribe them with candy bars to talk to her. She learned the reasons they left school and what might have helped them stay in. Her research told her that students need a caring adult at school and she has tried to be that adult for many years. The last ten years have been spent mostly on prevention work. There is research that shows most children who will eventually drop out can be spotted in 2nd or 3rd grade. She is starting her tenth year working at Quannah McCall Empowerment Elementary in North Las Vegas, Nevada. It is an area of high crime and poverty. Her second year at school one of her students saw her uncle shot and killed in their driveway as she walked home from school.

Mrs. Reeh has worked in this community to help improve academics, parental and community involvement in the school, as well as make connections with students. She seeks out former students who are in high school and encourages them to graduate. She makes sure to fulfill the other needs of children for food, clothing, shoes, and more. Most importantly she tries to instill the hope for a better future by staying in school. She is very passionate about education and wants all children to receive the great education they all deserve.

2010 NDPN CRYSTAL STAR AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE INDIVIDUAL WINNERS

AARON L. SMITH Newport News, VA



A 2008 graduate of Old Dominion University with a Doctorate in Educational Leadership, Dr. Aaron L. Smith is currently an Assistant Principal at Gildersleeve Middle School in Newport News, Virginia. He has over a decade of experience in the classroom as a mathematics teacher and administrator on the middle and high school level. His dissertation focused on comparing alternative teaching certification routes to that of traditional teaching certification in conjunction to SOL results. He is the recipient of the 2006 WHRO Technology Administrator of the Year and is an adjunct professor at Old Dominion University where he instructs at the graduate level on Best Teaching Practices and Foundations of Education. Dr. Smith has been invited to speak on the local, state, and national levels on topics from data to dropout prevention.

Dr. Smith is an educator who consistently demonstrates leadership, vision and creativity in dropout recovery, intervention and prevention efforts for Newport News Public Schools. Over the past two years, Dr. Smith has used his talents and expertise to build the strategic supports and collegial relationships necessary to achieve the division's benchmarks and achieve the goals established around dropout prevention, recovery and on-time graduation. His SAFE (Save All Freshmen Everywhere Program) that was developed in 2009-2010 to identify, monitor and initiate a plan to get students back on track for retained freshmen generated an 89% promotion rate in its first year. Dr. Smith is an innovative and reflective educator who has breathed new life and energy into the high school program, specifically focusing on the freshman year experience. His success as a building administrator has been instrumental in furthering the division's efforts to ensure all freshmen transition successfully into high school and are afforded the supports and opportunities necessary to graduate college-, career- and citizen ready for the 21st century. He is happily married to Sherri Smith and they have three children, Hunter, Ryan Claire and Addison.

2010 NDPN CRYSTAL STAR AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES—INDIVIDUAL WINNER

ROBIN J. MORRISON Miami, FL

Ms. Robin J. Morrison is the Instructional Supervisor for Clinical Behavioral Services for Miami-Dade County Public Schools. She oversees the development of academic, behavioral, and clinical services for Programs for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities. Ms. Morrison is responsible for the coordination of Functional Assessment of Behavior, Physical Restraint, Response to Intervention for Behavior, and School-wide Positive Behavior in her district. In addition, to the above areas, she is in charge of monitoring activities for SPP Indicator 2: Dropout for Students with Disabilities and Indicator 4: Suspension and Expulsion for Students with Disabilities.



Ms. Morrison has presented at the following conferences: The 2nd and The 3rd Annual Secondary Transition State Planning Institute, in Charlotte, North Carolina on Reducing the Dropout Rate in Miami-Dade; The 2009 OSEP Project Director's Conference, in Washington, DC, on Building Effective Interventions in Dropout Prevention: An Urban School Approach; and The 2009 Building Effective Practices in Dropout Prevention: A Summit for State and Local Education Agencies on the Advance Stages of Dropout Prevention Implementation and the Effective Principles of Leadership at the District Level.

**2010 NDPN CRYSTAL STAR AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE
DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE AWARD**

**MICHAEL CARTER
Dayton, OH**

Michael Carter currently serves as Interim Senior Vice President at Sinclair Community College, Dayton, Ohio. Mr. Carter has been with the Sinclair Fast Forward Center since its inception in 2001 and served as director from 2004 to 2010. From 2007 to 2010, he served in the dual role of Senior Director of High School Linkages. A former public school teacher, administrator and coach, he has over 30 years experience working with young people. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Wittenberg University and a Master of Science in Education from Wright State University. Mr. Carter has been a presenter at the National Urban Education Conference (2000, 2003, and 2005), the National Dropout Prevention Conference (2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, and 2009), the National At-Risk Youth Forum (2004, 2009) and the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (2006, 2010).



In 2001, the Montgomery County dropout rate was 25.6% and has since been cut to 12.6%. Fast Forward Center partner high schools have produced over 2,100 graduates. The Fast Forward Center is regarded as a national model for dropout recovery by the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N) at Clemson University, and has provided technical assistance for over 20 programs and cities throughout the country. The Fast Forward Center received the NDPC/N Crystal Star program award in 2005.

**CRYSTAL STAR OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS:
REQUESTS FOR NOMINATIONS FOR 2011**

A program or individual from your state could be a prestigious Crystal Star of Excellence Award winner in 2011, but only if you make a nomination. The forms will be available on the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network Web site, www.dropoutprevention.org, in April 2011.

The award categories are Excellence in Dropout Recovery, Intervention, and Prevention for Individuals and Programs; Excellence in Dropout Recovery, Intervention, and Prevention for Individuals and Programs for Students with Disabilities; and Distinguished Leadership and Service to the National Dropout Prevention Network.

All award winners will be honored at the 23rd Annual National Dropout Prevention Network Conference in Chicago, IL, at the Renaissance Schaumburg Hotel and Convention Center, October 9-12, 2011. Winners receive an elegant, engraved Crystal Star Award; a waiver of registration fees for the conference; and a one-night complimentary room at the Renaissance Schaumburg Hotel and Convention Center.

PAST NDPN CRYSTAL STAR AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE WINNERS

2005 - 2009

2005 Program Winners

Education Counts—ZerO Guilford, Guilford County Schools, Greensboro, NC
School for Integrated Academics and Technologies (SIATech) Charter School, Vista, CA
Sinclair Community College Fast Forward Center, Dayton, OH

2005 Individual Winners

Edward Bates, Positive Alt. Student Services (PASS), Lake Co. Reg. Off. of Ed., Grayslake, IL
Katherine Merritt, Howard School, Ontario-Montclair Schl. Dist., Montclair, CA
Franklin P. Schargel, Consultant and Author, Albuquerque, NM

2005 Students with Disabilities Program Winner

Moss Point High School Entrepreneurship Program, Moss Point, MS

2005 Students with Disabilities Individual Winner

Jose Blackorby, SRI Center for Ed. and Human Services, Menlo Park, CA

2005 Distinguished Leadership and Service Award

Mr. M. Buell Snyder, Principal, Jefferson County High School, Louisville, KY

2006 Program Winners

The Academy of Creative Education (ACE), North East Independent School District, San Antonio, TX
Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Academy for Excellence, Fayette County Public Schools, Lexington, KY
Providing Hope, South Sioux City Community School District, South Sioux City, NE

2006 Individual Winners

Patricia Cloud Duttweiler, Advisory Council for ACE, San Antonio, TX
Maria “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, Intercultural Development Research Association, San Antonio, TX
Valerie A. Woodruff, Delaware Department of Education, Dover, DE

2006 Students with Disabilities Individual Winner

Suana Wessendorf, Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines, IA

2006 Distinguished Leadership and Service Award

Dr. Jay Smink, NDPC, Clemson University, Clemson, SC

2007 Program Winners

The Latin American Community Center's High School Recovery Program, Wilmington, DE
Communities In Schools of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA

2007 Individual Winners

Beverly Herrlinger, Jefferson County High School, Louisville, KY
Laura Brown, North Georgia Learning Resources System, Cleveland, GA

2007 Distinguished Leadership and Service Award

Arthur Stellar, Taunton Public Schools, Massachusetts

2008 Program Winners

Clark Pleasant Academy, Whiteland, IN
Simon Youth Foundation Education Resource Centers, Indianapolis, IN
Star Academy Program™, Pickens, SC

2008 Individual Winners

Sandy Addis, Pioneer RESA, Cleveland, GA
Judith Ann and Joseph F. Pauley, Process Communication, Potomac, MD
Brian Sites, River's Edge High School, Richland, WA

2008 Distinguished Leadership and Service Award

John Murray, CEO of AdvancePath Academics, Inc., Williamsburg, VA

2009 Program Winners

Butler Tech's Options Academy - Wokini, West Chester, OH
Grossmont Union High School District's Dropout Prevention Program, El Cajon, CA
SUCCESS Program, Des Moines Public Schools, Des Moines, IA

2009 Students with Disabilities Program Winner

Barbara Goleman Senior High, M-DCPS Residential Electrical Wiring Program, Miami Lakes, FL

2009 Individual Winners

Kathy Edwards Bell, Viking Academy, Spartanburg High School, Spartanburg, SC
Wayne Rodolfich, Superintendent, Pascagoula School District 28, Pascagoula, MS

2009 Distinguished Leadership and Service Award

Patrick J. O'Connor, Kent State University, Kent, OH