

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SPECIALIZED EDUCATION FACILITIES

Annual Awards Program

VAISEF is proud to recognize the incredible achievements and contributions of our members, their staff, their students, and their external partners as we educate and empower students across the Commonwealth of Virginia. This document describes the awards for which VAISEF solicits nominations from our members.

All nominations may be submitted via the following internet form:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VAISEF2017Awards>

Please note Nomination Guidelines below!

For the 2016-2017 school year, we are accepting nominations for the following awards:

1. Margaret Shepherd Teaching Award
2. Making A Difference Award
3. Commitment to Community Award
4. Empowering Administrator Award
5. Stakeholder of the Year
6. Giving Back Award
7. Parent of the Year Award
8. Student Achievement Award
9. Most Improved Student Award
10. Student Leadership Award
11. Excellence in Board Service Award

For awards 1-4, VAISEF will award one nominee in each category.

For awards 5-11, VAISEF will select 3 awardees from the pool of all nominations received for all such awards.

Nomination Guidelines

- **Please refrain from using the name of the nominee or name of your school in the nomination, as they are judged in a blind process.** Only VAISEF staff will know the name of the nominee and school until a selection is made.
- Only one nomination per award per school. (If more than one nomination is submitted from a single school, VAISEF staff will determine which one is sent to the judges.)
- Before you begin this nomination form, please ensure that your nomination or responses to the nomination questions have already been prepared and saved elsewhere so that you can cut and paste your answers. The form will NOT save your entries if you navigate away from the survey website and you will NOT be able to print a copy of the nomination before you submit it.
- **All nominations must be received by Tuesday, March 7 at 5:00 PM.**

All awardees will be recognized at the Annual Awards Banquet at the VAISEF Spring Conference. Please note the details of what is included in the award packages, as some awards include free conference registration and/or accommodations at the VAISEF spring conference.

Further information about each of these awards is described on the following pages.

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THE MARGARET SHEPHERD TEACHING AWARD

The Margaret Shepherd award annually recognizes a teacher who works with students with special needs and is employed by a school, which is a member of the Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities (VAISEF). Directors of schools may nominate someone from their facility who demonstrates a level of excellence and commitment consistent with the teaching career of Margaret Shepherd. Teachers must be nominated by their director. Letters of support from parents, students and staff other than the person nominating will not be considered in the selection process. Nominees must have a current license to teach in Virginia.

A nominee should be a teacher who:

- Possesses a commitment to children which will not allow failure
- Shows flexibility in teaching; is willing to try anything to enable a child to be successful
- Holds high expectations with respect to academic and social behavior; teaches children to be good citizens, as well as good students
- Shows an openness to collaborating with other teachers and professionals, and to trying new ideas
- Is committed to influencing children to behave through praise and encouragement, rather than punishment
- Realizes the importance of children having fun and enjoying learning

The winner of this award shall receive:

- The Margaret Shepherd Golden Apple
- A cash award of \$200
- Complimentary registration at the VAISEF Spring Conference
- Registration for one guest to attend the Awards Banquet
- One night of complimentary accommodations at the VAISEF Spring Conference

ABOUT MARGARET SHEPHERD

Margaret Shepherd was born August 14, 1899 in Salem, Illinois. She attended Pomona College in Claremont, California for one year, and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Stanford University in 1921. The same year she was offered the job of teacher and Assistant Principal of the high school in Palmyra, Virginia. While there she taught history, Latin and French.

At that time teachers were required to be single, so upon her marriage, in 1922, she resigned. In February, 1934, she received an M.A. in Education from George Washington University. She taught briefly in an elementary school in Alexandria in 1942, and then founded the Rosemont Child Center, a pre-school, first, and second grade, which she continued until 1950.

In 1947 her first husband, James Armstrong, died. In 1948, she took two more courses from George Washington University. And in 1950 she married again, moved to Oakland Farm, and started a summer camp. She was then 50 years old. Oakland was begun as a year round boarding school in 1967. In 1980 Mrs. Shepherd wrote and published Phonetic and Structural Analysis — The Oakland Way. She remained a learner throughout her life and continued to take courses through the University of Virginia to maintain her certificate as a teacher. She renewed her certification, through coursework, when she was eighty-nine.

Mrs. Shepherd's specialty was helping students who, despite years of effort, had been unable to learn to read. At Oakland children are assigned teachers who can best fit their special needs. She always took the "hopeless cases," those who had been unable to master even the bare rudiments of decoding. Teaching academic skills was very important to Mrs. Shepherd, but she remained centered on the belief that her students needed to know about life in

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general, and that the development of a sense of pride in themselves was essential to their future success. Thus, while there was time for teaching, there was also time for personal sharing which communicated respect for the child.

In an interview just before her 90th birthday celebration, she said, “I’m doing the only thing that really matters to me. Oakland, this school, these children — they’re all I really want to do. I wouldn’t have any life at all, were it not for teaching.”

THE MAKING A DIFFERENCE AWARD

“The importance of what you are doing is greater than you are”

- *Richard Warren*

This award, presented at the annual Spring VAISEF Conference, is intended to recognize a staff member that truly is “making a difference” in the lives of young people. The award is open to all Professional and Para Professional Staff (except teachers, CEOs, presidents, and executive level positions) who work with students with special needs and is employed by a school, which is a member of VAISEF. Directors of schools should nominate someone from their facility who demonstrates a level of excellence and commitment to their children. The staff member must be nominated by their director. Letters of support from parents and students will not be considered in the selection process.

Description (definition) of exceptional services:

- Services made over and above standards of expectations established for the staff position being recognized
- Creative and innovative services that have assisted the organization (school) to far exceed its goals and objectives for the success of the students

Criteria for exceptional services (choose at least one and no more than three areas):

1. Significant contribution
2. Extended Family Services
3. Exceptional guidance, educational and or life lessons service to children with special needs and their families
4. Innovative cutting edge services to students demonstrated by verifiable results
5. Development of creative ways to reach students with special needs to make a difference in their lives documented by results
6. Investigation and research of new alternatives for developing, counseling, educating students with special needs
7. Mentoring and coaching success strategies that are demonstrated by verifiable results

The winner of this award shall receive:

- An engraved crystal award
- A cash award of \$150
- Complimentary registration at the VAISEF Spring Conference
- Registration for one guest to attend the Awards Banquet
- One night of complimentary accommodations at the VAISEF Spring Conference

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COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY AWARD

This award will recognize a VAISEF facility who demonstrates a commitment to their community through service projects during the previous year. Nominees will need to show how their community service project or projects have a lasting impact on their community, the innovative or unique approaches that were used to solve the social problems, the involvement of staff and students from the facility, and how the project benefited another organization through monetary donation or the number of people that received services.

The winner of this award shall receive:

- An engraved award to the winning school
- Registration for three representatives from school to attend the Awards Banquet; ideally this is the school employee responsible for the winning project, a student who exemplified community service values in carrying out the project, and a representative of the community organization benefitting from the project.
- One night of complimentary accommodations at the VAISEF Spring Conference for each of the three representatives.
- Member school will be responsible to cover conference registration should any representative wish to attend the conference, as well as any cost for dinner for guests beyond the three representatives.

EMPOWERING ADMINISTRATOR AWARD

This award will recognize a facility administrator (Principal, Head of school) who demonstrates leadership in their administration. The awardee is someone who encourages creativity and innovation, remains abreast of developments in the field of special education, creates a positive school culture for staff and students, leads a program that prepares students for transition to their home school or post-secondary education or training, demonstrates leadership and exemplifies commitment to their facility, staff, students, and stakeholders.

The winner of this award shall receive:

- An engraved award
- A cash award of \$150
- Complimentary registration at the VAISEF Spring Conference
- Registration for one guest to attend the Awards Banquet
- Two nights of complimentary accommodations at the VAISEF Spring Conference

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NEW MERIT-BASED POOL OF AWARDS

From a pool of possible awards, VAISEF will solicit simple nominations from any category below. The VAISEF Awards Committee will select no more than three award recipients from all received. The winners of these awards shall receive:

- An engraved award
- A cash award of \$100
- Registration for themselves and spouse/guest to attend the Awards Banquet
- One night of complimentary accommodations at the VAISEF Spring Conference
- Member school will be responsible to cover conference registration cost should any winners wish to attend the full conference

Stakeholder of the Year

Open to people not employed by a VAISEF Facility (LEA Rep, Case Manager, OT, PT, Speech Therapist, or other stakeholders) who provide services to students in your facility. This individual will be recognized for demonstrating a high regard for student success and making a collaborative effort to work with the facility to ensure that student's needs are met and that what they are doing helps students grow academically and or behaviorally.

Giving Back Award

This award will be given to someone who volunteers for a VAISEF Facility and does not receive any compensation for their service. This person will provide a meaningful service to your facility or students either through tutoring or providing a service that your facility does not employ someone to do.

Parent of the Year Award

This award will be given to the parent or guardian of a student who attends your facility who works with your facility collaboratively while also providing guidance in facility improvement and overall success of not only their child, but other students at your school. This parent will be seen as a resource for your facility while providing a useful service.

Student Achievement Award

This award will go to a student who demonstrates high achievement through SOL Mastery, outstanding grades, and high attendance rates.

Most Improved Student

This award will be given to a student who demonstrates the most improvement both academically and behaviorally based on the year to which this award is given. Examples include students who move up quickly through level systems, increase in grades, and reaching behavioral goals set forth by the facility.

Student Leadership Award

This award will be given to a student who demonstrates outstanding leadership abilities, outstanding character, and a commitment to their facility through volunteering. The nominee will possess good moral character, be a good role model for other students in the facility, have positive relationships with staff and peers, and be in a leadership position for a student centered organization within the school.

Excellence in Board Service Award

This award will be given to a current member of the Board of Directors or Trustees of any VAISEF member school who has demonstrated their commitment to supporting such school through excellence in governance, philanthropy, or other pursuits of support.