

***For Immediate Release***

**HOUSTON EDUCATORS EARN THE KINDER EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD, GRANTED A COLLECTIVE \$240,000**

HOUSTON –September 26, 2016 – Twelve (12) school teachers were honored recently with the Kinder Excellence in Teaching Award receiving a collective total of \$240,000 from the [Kinder Foundation](#). Four teachers each from KIPP Houston Public Schools and YES Prep Public Schools, and two teachers from the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and Teach For America, received grants of \$20,000 each. Six of these decorated teachers are also Teach For America alumni.

The Kinder Excellence in Teaching Award was established in 1996 in honor of Edna C. Kinder, who taught special education students in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Her son, Rich Kinder, co-founder and executive chairman of Kinder Morgan, and his wife Nancy, created the awards to recognize innovative and results-oriented teaching and to raise public awareness of the importance of effective and committed teachers. To date, 114 teachers have been recognized and \$1.83 million granted.

**2016 Kinder Excellence in Teaching Award Winners:**

- **Crystal Hunter:** High School Algebra, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School
- **Angelica Martin:** Pre-K 4, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Assumption Catholic School
- **Michele Rodriguez:** 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, KIPP Dream Prep
- **Spencer Russell:** 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, KIPP Legacy Preparatory School, Teach For America 2012 alumnus
- **Eric Sweeney:** Middle School Science, KIPP 3D Academy, Teach For America 2009 alumnus
- **Amy Walker :** Kindergarten, KIPP Unity Primary
- **Parisa Behzadi:** Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Teach For America 2012 alumna, NCI – The New Neighbor School
- **Amanda Tysor:** High School Math, Teach For America 2012 alumna, SBISD – Northbrook High School
- **Michael Healey:** High School Art, YES Prep East End
- **Kai Lee:** High School Math, YES Prep Southeast
- **Samantha Merritt:** High School English and Grade Level Chair, YES Prep East End, Teach For America 2009 alumna
- **Adrian Pruett:** Middle School Math, YES Prep Southside, Teach For America 2011 alumna

“We applaud these 12 teachers for the great influence they have on today’s students, tomorrow’s leaders,” said Rich Kinder, chairman of the Kinder Foundation. “*These grants are intended to inspire and assist teachers achieve their personal goals in the way they work daily with students to forge their path to college*”.

The Kinder Excellence in Teaching Awards have changed the lives of the educators whom have earned them. For one recipient, it helped he and his wife start their family as they were able to use the money for IVF. For another teacher, she shared her award with her single mother by paying off her house.

### **About the Kinder Foundation**

The Kinder Foundation, a family foundation established in 1997 by Rich and Nancy Kinder, has distributed nearly \$260 million in gifts to transformational projects in the areas of urban green space, education, and quality of life. Visit [kinderfoundation.org](http://kinderfoundation.org).

### **About KIPP Houston Public Schools**

KIPP was founded in Houston in 1994 and has since grown to 200 public schools in 20 states and DC serving 80,000 children. Houston is KIPP's largest region, with 26 public schools serving nearly 15,000 students and an additional 1,000 alumni in college and beyond. While only eight percent of students from low-income communities across the nation graduate from college, KIPPsters boast a 51 percent college graduation rate, tracking from the 8th grade. [www.kipp-houston.org](http://www.kipp-houston.org)

### **About YES Prep Public Schools**

Since 1998, YES Prep Public Schools is a proven national leader with 16 Houston-based campuses strategically placed in underserved communities impacting over 11,600 children. YES Prep's mission is to increase the number of students from underserved communities who graduate from college prepared to lead. With 32,000 students on charter school waitlists in Houston, YES Prep's work is far from over. YES Prep received the inaugural Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools, is nationally ranked by the *U.S. News and World Report*, *The Washington Post*, and others, and has consistently been named one of Houston's "Best Places to Work" by the *Houston Business Journal*. [www.yesprep.org](http://www.yesprep.org)

### **About Teach For America - Houston**

Teach For America works in partnership with communities to expand educational opportunity for children facing the challenges of poverty. Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding college graduates and professionals to make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. Today, over 270 corps members are teaching across 5 school districts in Houston, as more than 1,400 alumni are working across different sectors to ensure that all children have access to an excellent education in our city. This year, Teach For America - Houston is celebrating 25 years of work with the Houston community. For more information, visit [www.teachforamerica.org](http://www.teachforamerica.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

### **About Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston**

Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston call young people to holiness and prepare them to live and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In collaboration with families, Archdiocesan Catholic schools teach the values of faith and tradition, serve the community, and ensure academic excellence. Catholic schools are committed to the evangelizing mission of the Church to educate and form witnesses who transform the world.

The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Catholic Schools make up the largest private school system in Texas. There are currently 60 schools throughout the Archdiocese, with more than 19,000 students enrolled. The schools serve students PreK-3 through 12th grade and all schools offer need-based tuition assistance for students. The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston serves 1.6 million Catholics in 10

counties. It is the largest Roman Catholic diocese in Texas and the 12<sup>th</sup> largest in the United States.  
[www.Choosecatholicschools.org](http://www.Choosecatholicschools.org).

### **Contact**

**John Holt, 281-726-6156, [jholt@kipphouston.org](mailto:jholt@kipphouston.org)**

**Chanelle Figueroa, [chanelle.figueroa@yesprep.org](mailto:chanelle.figueroa@yesprep.org)**

**Mika Rao, 713-523-4100, [mika.rao@teachforamerica.org](mailto:mika.rao@teachforamerica.org)**

**Catherine Rogan, 713-652-8213, [crogan@archgh.org](mailto:crogan@archgh.org)**