

KINDER FOUNDATION

For Immediate Release

TWELVE HOUSTON EDUCATORS RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS KINDER EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

Top educators from KIPP Texas Public Schools – Houston, YES Prep Public Schools, Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, and Teach For America Houston granted gifts of recognition totaling \$300,000

HOUSTON – Sept. 26, 2022 – Twelve (12) Houston-area school teachers were recently honored with the annual Kinder Excellence in Teaching Award and a gift of \$25,000 each, for a collective total of \$300,000, from the [Kinder Foundation](#). Award recipients are teachers from KIPP Texas Public Schools – Houston, YES Prep Public Schools, Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, and Teach for America Houston. Each recipient was nominated by their school leader or school director, has taught at the same network or school for at least three years, is a positive motivator to students and faculty, and has led students to academic growth.

"We look forward to celebrating the Kinder Excellence in Teaching Award winners each year and recognizing the important role teachers play in the lives and futures of their students. With this recognition, we try to provide some financial award along with well-deserved recognition for these educator heroes," said Nancy Kinder, President and CEO of the Kinder Foundation.

The Kinder Excellence in Teaching Awards have a transformational impact on the lives of the educators who earn them. In the past, teachers have used the award money in various ways to help improve the quality of life for themselves, their families, their students, and their communities.

2022 Kinder Excellence in Teaching Award Winners:

THE ARCHDIOCESE OF GALVESTON – HOUSTON

Letizia Guillen: Kindergarten, Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic School

Danyell Nixon: 11th grade, Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School of Houston

“Ms. Guillen and Ms. Nixon, teachers in The Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, are both remarkable individuals and impactful teachers because they ensure that their students know that they are cared for, feel their unconditional support, and achieve beyond what the students themselves think possible. They transform the lives of their students because of how they view their responsibility to God as His instruments in our Catholic classrooms, as well as the dedication they share with their students’ families to help them excel in life. I am extremely proud of this year’s winners and know that they are deserving of this honor and much more!”

KIPP TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS – HOUSTON

Dr. Jemaniece Gilbert: 3rd grade, KIPP Zenith Academy

Jessica Harris: 6th grade, KIPP Courage College Prep

Ashly George: 5th grade, KIPP Academy Middle School

SaMaya Readore : 4th grade, KIPP CONNECT Houston Primary

“We are so proud to have four of our KIPP Texas-Houston teachers receiving the Kinder Excellence Teaching Award,” says Dan Caesar, Regional Superintendent for KIPP Texas-Houston. “These educators have set the bar of excellence in what true teaching should look like in a classroom. They have rigorous high expectations and push all of their students to be the best version of themselves. We thank the Kinder Foundation for recognizing our teachers’ hard work and dedication to our Little KIPPsters.”

TEACH FOR AMERICA HOUSTON

Teela Murphy: 6th and 8th grade, Stevenson Middle School, HISD

Thomas Pich: 4th grade, Patt Neff Elementary, HISD

“Teach For America Houston is incredibly grateful to the Kinder Foundation for recognizing hardworking and committed educators for making a difference in the lives of students. We look forward to this moment every year and are ecstatic for Teela and Thomas, who are both extremely deserving of this honor for the innovative and results-oriented teaching approaches they bring to their jobs each day. Our team is proud to call them Teach For America Houston alumni,” said Tiffany Cuellar Needham, executive director of Teach For America Houston.

YES PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Kat Abe: 7th and 8th grade, YES Prep Northbrook Middle School

Dylan Lewis: 10th grade, YES Prep Northline (TFA)

Justine Sanchez: 6th grade, YES Prep Southwest

Elizabeth Walthall: 11th grade, YES Prep Northbrook High School (TFA)

At YES Prep Public Schools, our vision is that every child in Houston will have equitable access to a public school that delivers a college-ready education,” said Mark DiBella, Chief Executive

Officer. "We are so appreciative of and thankful for all that the Kinder Foundation does to recognize and support our incredible teachers who work tirelessly to help make this vision a reality. It is an honor to have four YES Prep teachers recognized this year, and we are thrilled for Kat Abe, Dylan Lewis, Justine Sanchez and Elizabeth Walthall."

The Kinder Excellence in Teaching Awards have gifted approximately \$4.5 million to over 287 teachers since the program was established in 2001. The program was created in honor of Kinder Foundation Chairman Rich Kinder's mother, Edna C. Kinder, who taught special education for many years in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

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2022 recipient biographies, headshots and additional images can be found [here](#).

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About the Kinder Foundation

The Kinder Foundation, a family foundation established in 1997 by Rich and Nancy Kinder of Houston, Texas, provides transformational grants that impact urban green space, education, and quality of life. More at www.kinderfoundation.org.

About The Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston

Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston make up the largest private school system in Texas and have served students since 1847. With 56 schools throughout the 10 counties of the Archdiocese, the schools serve more than 17,000 students in PreK-3 through 12th grades. Amongst the 56 schools, five grade schools and 11 high schools are owned and/or operated by religious orders or a Board of Directors. 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, we teach the values of our faith and tradition, serve our community, and ensure academic excellence. Our schools are committed to the evangelizing mission of the Church to educate and form witnesses who transform the world. All schools offer need-based tuition assistance for students. The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston serves 1.7 million Catholics and is the largest Roman Catholic diocese in Texas.. Check us out at www.choosecatholicschools.org or <https://www.facebook.com/CatholicSchoolsHouston>

About KIPP Texas Public Schools – Houston

[KIPP Texas](#) is an open-enrollment, public, tuition-free charter school network of 59 schools with nearly 33,000 pre-K-12 students across Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio. KIPP Texas is part of the national KIPP network of college-preparatory public charter schools in 20 states and the District of Columbia. Nationwide, KIPP students complete four-year college at a rate of 36 percent, comparable to the national average for all students and approximately three times higher than the average of students from low income families. www.kiptexas.org.

About Teach For America Houston

Teach For America works in partnership with 350 urban and rural communities across the country to expand educational opportunity for children. Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding leaders who make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. Currently, over 200 corps members teach in school districts across greater Houston. They join a Teach For America alumni community over 1,700 strong locally. Today Teach For America is a force of 64,000 alumni and corps members working in over 9,000 schools nationwide in pursuit of profound systemic change. From classrooms to districts to state houses across America, they are reimagining education to realize the day when every child has an equal opportunity to learn, lead, thrive, and co-create a future filled with possibility. Teach For America is a proud member of the AmeriCorps national service network. For more information, visit www.teachforamerica.org and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

About YES Prep Public Schools

With 24 campuses serving more than 18,000 students, YES Prep leads Houston forward by redefining what is possible in public education when children have access to excellent schools from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Nationally ranked by *U.S. News & World Report*, YES Prep Public Schools are open to and tuition-free for all children. In addition to rigorous education and enrichment programs, YES Prep campuses provide meals, devices, transportation, special education, English language learning, and access to healthcare, mental health, and other student support services. To learn more, visit www.yesprep.org.