

KINDER FOUNDATION

For Immediate Release

2024 Kinder Excellence in Teaching Awards recognizes twelve outstanding Houston educators

Kinder Foundation grants a total of \$360,000 to top educators from Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, KIPP Texas Public Schools – Houston, Teach For America Houston, and YES Prep Public Schools

HOUSTON – September 16, 2024 – Twelve (12) Houston-area school teachers were recently honored with the annual Kinder Excellence in Teaching Award (KETA) and a gift of \$30,000 each from [Kinder Foundation](#). A total of \$360,000 was granted to 12 teachers from the following schools: Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston; KIPP Texas Public Schools – Houston; Teach For America Houston; and YES Prep Public Schools. Recipients were nominated by their school leader or school director, have taught at the same network or school for at least three years, are a positive motivator to students and faculty, and have led students to measurable academic growth.

“The Kinder Excellence in Teaching Award recipients are passionate, supportive and effective educators who are invested in their students’ success,” said Nancy Kinder, president and CEO of Kinder Foundation. “We hope they are encouraged by this recognition and continue to inspire others to make a positive difference in their communities.”

KETA has granted over \$5 million to 311 teachers since it was established in 2001. This year, the award amount increased for a total gift of \$30,000 per recipient. The award has a transformational impact on the lives of the educators who earn it. 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.

KETA was created in honor of Rich Kinder’s mother, Edna C. Kinder, who taught special education students for many years in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

INTRODUCING THE 2024 KINDER EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD WINNERS:

The Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston

Sandra Rodriguez: Pre-Kindergarten Teacher, St. Christopher Catholic School

David Sharma: Art and Music Teacher, Electives Department Chair, Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School of Houston

KIPP Texas Public Schools – Houston

Leona Aaron: English I (Honors English I and Practical Writing Skills) Teacher, KIPP Houston High School

Coleton Dudley: 3rd Grade English Language Arts – Lead Teacher, Writing Department Chair, KIPP Connect Primary School

Huda Hamdan: 5th Grade Math Teacher, KIPP Journey Primary School

Auria Johnson: 8th Grade English Language Arts and Reading Teacher, KIPP 3D Academy

Teach For America Houston

Alexis Gage: 9th Grade Biology Teacher – Lead, Cesar Chavez High School

Eric Pacheco: 3rd Grade Math and Science Teacher, Sylvan Rodriguez Elementary School

YES Prep Public Schools

Erica Lapien: AP English Literature and Restorative Practices Teacher, YES Prep Brays Oaks Secondary

Che’Ron Lewis: Special Education Teacher, YES Prep Northline Secondary

Brenda Rangel: AP English Literature Teacher, YES Prep Southeast Secondary

Hong Tran: 5th Grade Math Teacher, YES Prep Southeast Elementary

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[View biographies and headshots of the 2024 KETA recipients.](#)

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About Kinder Foundation

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](http://www.kiptexas.org) is an open-enrollment, public, tuition-free charter school network of 54 schools with more than 31,000 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 Houston works in partnership with local districts and charter schools to expand educational opportunities for children. Founded in Houston in 1991, 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. Today, TFA Houston is a force of over 2,200 alumni and corps members impacting more than 31,000 students in pursuit of profound systemic change. From classroom to systems-level positions, their leaders 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/houston and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

About YES Prep Public Schools

With 24 campuses serving 20,000 students, YES Prep Public Schools 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 is open to and tuition-free for all children. In addition to rigorous education and enrichment programs, YES Prep schools provide meals, technology devices, transportation, special education, English language learning, and access to healthcare, mental health, family engagement opportunities and other student support services. To learn more, visit yesprep.org.