

OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP/SERVICE



MICHELLE PFAFF
North Dakota Department
of Corrections and Rehabilitation

In the summer of 2022, Michelle Pfaff took on the responsibilities of the director of education. Michelle's calm demeanor, logical thinking and organizational skills made the transition seamless. Her exceptional leadership skills continue to be showcased in the way she professionally plans for future programming opportunities and staffing needs. She saw a need for an additional instructor at DWCRC, because of a large increase in residents needing to be served in education and hired another instructor in response. Michelle stays grounded in what is going on in the classrooms and enjoys volunteering to read GED tests for students with accommodations.

In addition to leading the entire DOCR Education team for the past school year, she has been part of a positive shift in reading instruction for the department's students. Michelle was willing to work with two instructors who were exploring evidence-based reading instruction for adult learners. She gave those instructors the opportunity to pilot a new way of teaching reading, which is proving to be successful with students. Because of those successes, she collaborated with the instructors to write a reading instruction plan for the department and was very supportive of the two instructors moving on to become state-level trainers. This has led to the first group of DOCR instructors becoming trained in evidence-based reading instruction through STAR.

Michelle supports NDALL's purpose of lifelong learning by looking for new opportunities for residents. She serves as a board member for NDALL and MPAEA and is also an active member of the Correctional Education Association (CEA), recently attending an event in New Orleans. She is in tune with local, regional and national issues related to ABE. This year, she was instrumental in starting a CDL training program. Additionally, she played a large role in getting residents access to an internet network where they can access a

limited number of websites for educational and job-searching purposes. Michelle also supports the lifelong learning of the instructors she supervises by encouraging them to get further training in areas of interest, such as traumatic brain injuries and reading instruction.

Michelle is a kind and compassionate leader who is always willing to listen to staff member concerns and visit about issues without letting emotions get in the way. She is calm under pressure and asserts herself confidently. We are fortunate to have Michelle Pfaff as our leader and director of education.

HIGHEST AVERAGE GED SCORE AWARD

ISAAC DORMAN
Grand Forks Community High School

Isaac was home-schooled throughout his educational journey and needed a GED to secure financial aid to continue his education. Isaac put in the work that resulted in him scoring a 728, the highest in the state. Way to go, Isaac!

Currently, Isaac is attending college in Utah and unable to be here.

Today we honor Isaac Dorman with The North Dakota Association for Lifelong Learning Award for the Highest Average GED Score.



NDALL's mission is to support adult and alternative education, its educators, students and partners.

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2023 A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES

2022-2023 NDALL AWARDS



NORTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

AWARDS LUNCHEON

SEPTEMBER 28, 2023

STUDENT OF THE YEAR - ADULT EDUCATION

BRITTANY SURRITTE
Region III Adult
Learning Center



Living in Missouri, a high school dropout, homeless, pregnant, aimless, and scared was once the description of student Brittany Surritte. Then one day, she and her husband got a phone call from family in New Rockford, N.D., offering them a place to stay until they could get back on their feet. They jumped at the opportunity and made the trip to make a fresh start. A little over a month later, Brittany's husband found a job and housing for their growing family.

After getting settled and welcoming their twin boys, Brittany decided she wanted to get her GED and heard about the ALC in Devils Lake. She knew it was going to be a hard task since she didn't have a driver's license. The only day she could get to Devils Lake was on her husband's day off from work. Things got a little brighter when she found out the ALC would come to New Rockford and meet her in the library one day a week. Each Tuesday, Brittany would meet with an instructor and study, ask questions and take ready tests. She would enthusiastically take books to do work from home and use her phone to study the online programs since she didn't own a computer. She would patiently wait for her husband's day off and travel the 45 minutes to Devils Lake to take an official test. They would do this for four months and on January 30, 2023, Brittany passed her last official test.

Brittany exemplified a perfect student. She always came with a smile on her face, determination, motivation, and an eagerness in reaching her goal of getting her GED. After celebrating her victory, she was asked what was next on her "to do" list. She explained, a year ago, she would have never thought about attending college, but now that she obtained her GED she can dream and set goals for herself. Brittany is currently enrolled for the summer semester at Lake Region State College.

2023 NDALL AWARDS

STUDENT OF THE YEAR - ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

KA'MAJAH WRIGHT
West Fargo
Community High School



Ka'Majah Wright joined the West Fargo Community High School (CHS) in August 2022, as a transfer student from West Fargo High School. After meeting with his mother, Crystal Wright, who was deeply concerned about Ka'Majah's educational success and his future, CHS felt he would be a perfect fit for community high school. Many experiences and observations since have validated the belief Ka'Majah would not just thrive, but would excel, in an alternative setting.

Ka'Majah quickly established himself as a respected leader among his CHS peers and has distinguished himself as a highly effective student mentor for younger learners in the alternative middle school program. He served with commitment and dedication in two student run organizations (Philanthropy and Youth, and Student Leadership) and has set a high bar for positive and respectful interaction with peers and staff.

Even more impressive is the resiliency and determination Ka'Majah has demonstrated as he grew into an irreplaceable student leader. He survived being shot multiple times in a tragic incident two years ago, he supports his mother at home while she battles cancer, and he helps raise his younger siblings who have special needs. He experienced the incarceration of his father and uncle, cementing his determination to blaze a vastly different life pathway for himself.

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

FRANCES DRURY
Region II Adult Learning
Center - Devils Lake



What do you get when you combine empathy, respect, flexibility, positivity, persistence, and a caring heart? Her name is Frances Drury.

Since starting her job in August 2018 as an instructor at the Region III Adult Learning Center in Devils Lake, Frances has been boundless in her commitment to the students who walk through the door. Her welcoming disposition ensures the students she encounters feel a sense of acceptance, support, safety, compassion, and understanding.

Frances works to connect with each student on an individual level and "listens hard" when a student just needs to talk about their situation or life's struggles. If a student exhibits signs they can't grasp a concept, lack motivation, or be diligent, Frances embraces "the suck" and shows an everlasting blast of tenacity. It is not uncommon for students to thank her for "believing in them."

Also, Frances is always looking to sharpen her skills and learn as much as she can in assisting her students. She takes time to attend webinars, conferences and trainings that focus on all different areas of the GED curriculum. By building up these foundations and increasing her knowledge, she has been able to accelerate the students' ability in scoring points on the GED essay and expanding vocabulary to assist in students becoming stronger readers.

She sets an example for working collaboratively with others in the way she conducts herself with her co-workers, always interacting in a professional, yet fun and respectful manner.

Not only is she an educator, but she is an immense asset to the Region III Adult Learning Center, education and its students.