

2001 Pete Gross Best Practice Award

The presentation of awards at the Spring Conference has been one of the traditions of the conference. Over the years the OSPA Executive Board has established several awards to recognize its members for their achievements and contributions to the field of school psychology. Through the awards that will be presented here today to some of our colleagues we want to publicly acknowledge their expertise, honor them for their contributions, and thank them for sharing their ideas and ideals with us. The first of the awards to be presented is the:

PETE GROSS BEST PRACTICE AWARD

This award was established in 1988 to recognize school psychology programs that demonstrate exemplary professional practices and to provide information about these programs to other school psychologists. It was named in honor of Pete Gross, a school psychologist who later worked for the State Department of Education. Pete understood the impact that school psychologists can have, and, in his role with the state department, he worked with us to provide the best services for children. He continually challenged us to develop the skills needed to function at the level of “best practice”. This afternoon OSPA will be presenting two Best Practices Awards.

The first award is presented to Janie Groh in recognition of her work in organizing and maintaining a parent education and support group for parents of difficult children over the past ten years. Its purpose is to provide guidance and support to a group that is often blamed for children’s problems but never instructed as to how to improve their skills. She provides up-to – date information, helps design behavior plans, develops homework support schedules, helps parents through life transitions, and gives instruction on how to improve relationships between parents and children. She has assisted parents in times of marital discord, divorce, adoption, and the death of a child. The members of the group become an excellent support system for each other and often meet outside of the group meetings for support, friendship, and fun. Parents in the group come back week after week and year after year to provide support for other parents and to get support as they need it. In the words of one of the recommendation letters: “Janie has given these parents support and encouragement when they needed it most and the

children and parents have been given a gift in Janie that no one could ever replace”. Please join with OSPA in honoring Janie Groh with the Pete Gross Best Practice Award for 2001.

A second Best Practices award is presented in recognition of the work of Carolyn Vander Meer in developing the DIBELS program in her district. DIBELS, or Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, is an assessment tool for preventing reading failure that is based on research about the necessary skills for proficient reading. The data collected allows teachers to identify students who are not on the path to becoming fluent readers by the end of first grade and to design interventions to change their reading outcomes. Carolyn’s vision of improved outcomes for children led her to research about effective school practices, such as the DIBELS program. Carolyn assembled a team, facilitated the administration and scoring of the DIBELS, and developed the team’s ability to analyze and interpret the results. Carolyn has encouraged educators in her district to think differently about providing support to students in the early grades. As one of the letters of recommendation noted: “Carolyn’s knowledge of research-based interventions and her willingness to teach others has strengthened classroom instruction for all the students in the district”. Please join with OSPA in presenting the Pete Gross Best Practice Award to Carolyn Vander Meer.