

Each year at the Spring Conference the OSPA Executive Board invites the members and guests of OSPA to take a few moments to recognize some of their colleagues - school psychologists of Ohio - for their achievements and contributions to the field of school psychology. Through the awards that will be presented here today OSPA wants to publicly acknowledge the expertise and contributions of some of our colleagues, and we also want to thank them for sharing their ideas and ideals with us.

The first of the awards to be presented today is the:

PETE GROSS BEST PRACTICE AWARD

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

One award is being presented in recognition of the development and implementation of an intervention model that focuses on the development of local metrics in a variety of basic curriculum areas. Mr. Donald Saracusa calls this a tri-level data base intervention model. The data gathered helps the Intervention Assistance Teams make decision, the model is encompassed in the local School Improvement Plan, and it provides prediction variables related to individual student outcomes. One of the teachers in the district where Don works, Akron Public Schools, stated that he has created an excellent conferencing tool to help both teacher and parent realize where each child fits into the educational setting and to enable them to follow a child’s progress from year to year using the same evaluation tools. It is a vehicle for seeing a child’s strengths and weaknesses as well as a nonthreatening way for the teacher to see the instruction areas that are in need of improvement. OSPA is pleased to present the Pete Gross Best Practice Award to Mr. Donald Saracusa.

Over the past few years we have become acutely aware of an increased focus on security and on the need for vigilance for personal safety, and on the school psychologist's role in dealing with crisis situations. Mr. Brian Hill, a school psychologist in Akron Public Schools, was instrumental in gathering research around the latest crisis intervention techniques, exploring critical incident stress management systems, adjusting them to a school setting, studying models of stress debriefing and defusing, and finally developing a comprehensive training model. A district crisis response team was trained in intervention techniques for suicide ideation, death adjustment issues, and issues surrounding terrorism. Mr. Hill developed crisis response kits, designed on-going training sessions, and gathered resource materials. He has approached the development of a crisis response program from both a theoretical and practical perspective. Please join OSPA in recognizing the achievements and contributions of Mr. Brian Hill with the presentation of the Pete Gross Best Practices Award.

The third Best Practice Award is being presented to a team of school psychologists from Akron Public Schools, Mr. Patrick McGown, Mr. Robert Kubick, and Mrs. Aimee Kirsch. As one of the letters of nomination stated, these individuals “work with the unworkable, test the untestable and reason with the unreasonable every single day. They work with children on the verge of expulsion, families on the verge of collapse, and administrators on the verge of implosion”. They have not approached these at-risk populations as situations to be merely managed; they have instead created a variety of educational programs that address the diverse needs of these students. Under the section of the Child Study Department called the Pupil Adjustment Program they have created, or worked with community resources in creating, the Saturn School, Overage High School, Phoenix Program, and Olympus Program. These psychologists attend expulsion and disciplinary hearings, respond to crises that involve violence, provide liaisons in several community programs, and have supervised fourteen interns during their two-month periods of experience in the Pupil Adjustment Program. Please join with OSPA in recognizing the best practices of Aimee Kirsch, Robert Kubick, and Patrick McGown.

Before moving on to the Bartlett Award we would like to congratulate the Akron Public Schools. We have just presented three best practice awards to individuals from that school district. We would like to commend the leadership in the district, particularly Dr. Bard, who encourages the district's school psychologists to do the research and to make the commitment to function at the best practice level – and who also find the time to organize the nominations materials in order that those make that commitment can be recognized.

BARTLETT AWARD

Over thirty years ago, in March of 1972, OSPA created the Clyde V. Bartlett Distinguished Service Award in memory of Mr. Bartlett, an active member of OSPA who served on the Executive Board, was newsletter editor, worked on the school and private practice certification committee, and was president in 1960-61. He is remembered for his ability to make everyone feel welcome and vital to the organization.

The purpose of this award is to recognize an Ohio school psychologist for outstanding services or achievement in the profession. The criteria for selection include: significant contributions to the growth and development of the profession, outstanding service to the community in the area of mental health, and the personal qualities thought to be desirable in the profession.

This year's recipient of the Clyde Bartlett Distinguished Service Award will be introduced by Dr. Cynthia Reighard.