

OSPA Fall Conference 2011

Ohio School Psychologist of the Year Award



Lucinda Thompson, Ed.S., NCSP, ABSNP,
SP530
Awards Committee Co-Chair

School Psychologist
Kent City Schools
ke_cthompson@kentschools.net



Melissa Bestgen, Psy.S.
Awards Committee Co-Chair

School Psychologist
Cleveland Metropolitan School District
mmbestgen@gmail.com

In 1991 the OSPA Executive Board voted to establish the School Psychologist of the Year Award – an award that would honor a member of OSPA for current excellence in service delivery. It was required, therefore, that at least seventy-five percent of a candidate's time be spent providing school psychological services to students, teachers, and parents, typically in a school setting.

Shayla Brown – Cleveland Regional

Shayla Brown was nominated by the Cleveland Association of School Psychologists for the OSPA School Psychologist of the Year award.

Shayla graduated from Cleveland State University in 2006 and began her career in Maple Heights schools. In Maple Heights, Shayla has worked tirelessly on evaluations, consultation with teachers and parents, group and individual counseling, crisis team, and as a graduate student supervisor. She received several recommendations from intervention specialists, regular education teachers, and administrators describing her commitment to the field of school psychology and service delivery. Shayla has maintained 100% compliance on her large caseload, as well as providing individual and group counseling to her students. Her colleagues are impressed by her thorough knowledge of regulations and best practices, as well as her creative and successful intervention suggestions. She has worked hard to become a familiar face in her buildings and has established rapport with all members of the school community, from teachers and administrators to parents and students.

Shayla is very involved with her professional organizations, active in the Cleveland Association of School Psychologists, OSPA, and NASP. From 2006 to 2008, Shayla was co-chair of the CASP membership committee, working to grow the association. In 2009, she was elected CASP President and worked to revitalize CASP's advocacy efforts. In 2009, she began working as co-chair of the OSPA Public Relations committee, a position she continues to hold. In 2011, she was nominated for, and received, the CASP School Psychologist of the Year Award.

Mary Geirhart – Central Ohio Regional

Mary Geirhart was nominated by the School Psychologists of Central Ohio for the OSPA School Psychologist of the Year Award.

Mary graduated from Bowling Green University in 1985 and began her career in Delaware City Schools. Mary is now in the Olentangy Local Schools, where she works on evaluations, individual and group counseling, response to intervention techniques, progress monitoring with Aimsweb and DIBELS, and conducting professional development seminars. She also participates in many of the committees in her schools, including the Literacy, Multicultural, Social, IAT, and Crisis committees. Her colleagues wrote glowing recommendations about her commitment to her students, exemplary evaluation reports, ability to explain difficult cases to parents and teachers, and her availability as a resource for the entire school community – whether or not she was at work that day. A parent she has

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worked with shared how important Mary has been to her son's academic career, providing answers and insights into how he could succeed in school.

Mary has been very involved in her professional organizations since early in her career. She has been a member of the School Psychologists of Central Ohio Board since 1992, and was elected president of the association from 2001 to 2003, then again from 2008 to the present. She has worked to reach out to many organizations in the Central Ohio area and share the expertise that school psychologists can provide. She has provided professional development to staff in her schools, members of SPCO, and at other professional conferences. In 2010, she was awarded SPCO's Best Practices Award for her efforts.

Rob Kubick – Kent/Akron Regional

Rob Kubick has worked as a full-time school psychologist in the Akron Public Schools for the past 13 years. Rob has not only provided psychological services to students in a variety of contexts at the district level, he has also been involved with OSPA in a variety of contexts, and has contributed in many ways at both state and national levels.

Rob currently provides comprehensive school psychological services to four diverse and challenging school environments in the Akron Public Schools. Rob has worked with the building principal at Goodyear Middle School to recruit and staff the first buildings' Intervention Assistance Team (IAT). He acted as one of the primary trainers and facilitators of the team. Rob uses the district-wide Pyramid of Learning Framework as the primary model for reading, math, and behavior tiered interventions. Rob was instrumental in developing interventions to increase stu-

dent attendance, decrease behavioral referrals, and improve AYP in this building. Rob has also acted as a consultant and regular member of the Positive Behavior Support team for Goodyear Middle School. Rob has worked with this team to develop a school wide system that prompted systemic changes in the school climate.

Another of his assignments is providing services to the Akron Opportunity Center, an alternative middle school program that serves nearly 100 students with the most significant behavior needs from across the district. Rob recognized the need for a more comprehensive service delivery model and was instrumental in developing an intervention assistance team and implementing both academic and behavioral progress monitoring system using Aimsweb. In addition, he has supported staff in reviewing this data and developing appropriate intervention plans.

He also provides support to the Akron Alternative Academy, an alternative high school that serves students who are at risk of dropping out and failing to graduate high school. Rob has assisted the Academy in developing a building-wide mode of interventions and developed local norms to assist in order to provide consistent data that could be used to determine necessary interventions for these students.

Rob's work in his other schools has been similar to his efforts at Goodyear. He has introduced building-wide attendance incentive programs, has recruited and assisted IAT teams, furthered building academic interventions, compiled assessment data to evaluate both reading and math interventions building wide, and has collaborated with the International Institute to support ESL students in their transition to the Akron Public Schools. Rob has also reached out to community partners and resources and assisted in various fundraisers to support the intervention teams at his schools.

Rob has served on a variety of departmental committees. He has supervised dozens of interns, helped to lead the training in the district's web-based software program for MFEs and IEPs and has been an integral part in developing a Professional Learning Community (PLC) in his department.

In addition to his district-wide accomplishments, Rob is completing his third year as Editor of The Ohio School Psychologist (TOSP), which has evolved into a publication that is held in high esteem at both the state and national levels. He has served as President of OSPA and has also worked on the OSPA archives project, membership survey project, OSPA Constitution and Operations Manual project, along with various other committees and initiatives. Rob has presented on various topics at the local, state, and national levels and has acted as a resource and mentor for students entering the school psychology program. Rob is deeply involved in his church and other community activities as well.

Rob has been noted by his colleagues as a role model and goes above and beyond the call of duty. He takes initiative and puts forth effort needed to accomplish the goal at hand. Rob is described as dependable, reliable, responsible, and insightful. He is an energetic problem-solver, hard-working and highly skilled. His friends and co-workers alike report him to be personable, funny, a good colleague and a friend.

I have had the privilege of working side by side with Rob on many of these accomplishments. So it is with great pleasure that I am able to present the award for 2011-2012 Ohio School Psychologist of the Year to Dr. Robert Kubick.

Remarks from Rob Kubick

Good afternoon, everyone.

First, I would like to thank the members of the OSPA Executive Board, the Awards



Rob Kubick

Committee Co-Chairs, Cindy and Melissa, the members of their committee, and all the regional representatives involved in this year's selection process.

I would like to recognize the fine work of my distinguished co-nominees, Shayla Brown and Mary Gierhart. They are exceptional professionals with a well-deserved statewide reputation for excellence in service delivery and I am very humbled to be included among them today.

I would like to thank the Executive Board and the members of the Kent-Akron Association of School Psychologists for putting forward my name from our regional. In particular, I want to thank Ms. Stacey Ambrose and Mrs. Jennifer Douglas for their kind words in support of my nomination.

I would like to thank the pompous stuffed-shirts that made up the interview committee for the clinical psychology graduate program at The University of Akron nearly 20 years ago. Their arrogance and disdain for school psychology made we walk across the street to the College of Education right after the interview in order to find out about our profession for the first time. It's been a great ride ever since.

I would like to thank one of my nominators, Dr. Elizabeth Bard, the longtime Chief

Psychologist for the Akron Public Schools, now retired, and multiple honoree from this Association. Many years ago, she saw potential in me, where others saw only a five dollar haircut, poor fashion sense, and highly questionable table manners. Dr. Bard started my career as an intern, relentlessly encouraged my professional development over the years, and remains to this day an unfailing supporter.

I would like to thank Mrs. Susan Kruger of the Akron Public Schools. Susan was my first intern supervisor. I went straight from my Heineken-infused exploits at Akron U into her loving and protective supervisory arms. She made my bumpy professional transition much, much smoother. Susan is one of the unsung heroes of our profession—she has singlehandedly supervised dozens and dozens of interns who (thanks to her superior training) have gone on and done great things in Ohio school psychology. To this day, if you ask Susan who was her favorite intern ever, she'll place me squarely inside the top 24 or 25.

I would like to thank my colleague and longtime friend, previous OSPA President and current Treasurer-Elect, Mr. Terry Bendo, for his support of me from day one. Terry was my second intern supervisor and he was like the big brother, or even twin brother, I never had. Terry taught me that for one hour, five days a week, you could gorge yourself at a six dollar buffet, and still be a good school psychologist. Terry has literally given me the shirt off of his back for me to be here today (this is actually his suit – I split my suit pants three days ago). In the meatgrinder that is Akron school psychology, I should have flamed out long ago and Terry is probably the reason I didn't. He's a true gentleman of the highest integrity, and about the best friend a person could ever have.

I would like to thank Dr. Caven Mccloughlin and Dr. Cathy Telzrow of Kent State University. One can only assume that

Caven must have been sponsoring a "Gin and Bitters Day" at the office when he and Cathy approved my application to the Kent State Ph.D. program. I will always be thankful to them for their tireless support of me throughout my years in their program and beyond. They are class acts, consummate professionals, and Ohio school psychology owes much to them.

I want to thank Mrs. Valorie Wolcott Mendelson for her many kindnesses to me over the years. Valorie was OSPA President during my internship year. I was the last graduate of the Akron U program and when Valorie heard that I was the only intern from my training program at the intern conference, she sought me out and had me come sit at her presidential table for lunch and dine with all the important OSPA people. And my ego grew three sizes that day. Valorie was my first introduction to OSPA and I'll always be grateful to her for that.

Speaking of important OSPA people, I would like to thank Cheryl Van Den Berge and Ann Brennan, not only for their support of me, but for all of us as an Association. We in Ohio are envied across this country for the contributions and talents of Cheryl and Ann and I know that my gratitude is shared by our membership. I love them both—in fact, I love Ann almost as much as I fear Cheryl.

I want to thank several OSPA colleagues for their support. I can't name them all, but they include Dr. Sharon Reike, Mrs. Lynn Brumfield, Mr. John Biltz, Dr. Kathy McNamara, last year's recipient Mr. Dan Dean, Dr. Frank Scarano, Mrs. Kate Bobak Lavik, and Dr. Linda Neiheiser.

I would like to thank many other people in the Akron Public Schools who supported me in my day-to-day work. First among these was our administrative support staff, in particular Mrs. Vicki Bennett and Mrs. Penny Smith. Also, my four principals, six

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counselors, and those select few teachers who could talk to me for 30 consecutive seconds without making a referral. I want to thank my outstanding intern school psychologist from last year, Mrs. Nicole Shannon. She was the kind of intern I wish that I could have been—intelligent, competent, funny, and ahead of the curve. Before I would even suggest a project to her, Nicole had already completed it. She taught me as much as I ever taught her.

I would like to thank Mr. Don Saracusa, a previous recipient of this award, who constantly challenged me to step outside of the traditional role and leave the place better than I found it. I would like to thank Mrs. Kathryn Rodocker who, on the heels of winning an OSPA Best Practice award a couple of years ago, immediately and selflessly came to my buildings to help me train my staff and provided countless hours of support. Sadly, she's now thinking seriously of turning her back on school psychology, selling out, and becoming a principal. I ask you to please join me for the rest of the conference week and try to talk her out of it.

I would like to thank my colleague, OSPA Webmaster Jeff York. A sizeable portion of the work for which I was nominated was done side-by-side with Jeff. He is a future-oriented innovator, a crucial part of what makes our Association what it is, and a great friend. We were co-nominees last year and I very truly hope to see him up here soon.

I would like to thank our OSPA President, Mrs. Aimee Kirsch. Aimee and I came up together in this profession. She is quite simply the most skilled and talented professional with whom I have ever worked. So many things for which I was nominated were guided by Aimee from start to finish. Indeed, I would not be here today if I weren't for Aimee and I'll repeat that

again and again whenever she asks me to. Aimee is like my own sister, I love and respect her a great deal, and this day is made whole for me by virtue of her being a part of it.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Perry Clark. Perry has been like a grandfather to me. Taking a job in Akron and working for Perry Clark is kind of like Stockholm Syndrome. In an instant, you're taken hostage and, over time, for reasons you never fully understand, you begin to love your hijacker. Perry spent many years doing every single job in our department and he did it better than anyone. He had instant credibility as our leader, took us several steps forward in a very short time, and has never backed away from making tough choices when they were needed. Dr. Perry Clark has been the best boss anyone could ask for.

Finally, I want to thank my family. My parents, Robert and Deborah, were teenagers with very limited means when they had me forty years ago. They knew that education was my hope for a better life. I want to recognize my father, in particular, for the many sacrifices that he made on my be-

half, most of which are unknown to me to this day. My parents divorced just months before I graduated high school, but my dad had the will and resolve to help me become the first in our family to go to college. Next week will be six months since his death at only 59 years old. He would feel very proud if he were here today and be thanking all of you again and again. As Dr. Tom Fagan has reminded us many times, we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.

I want to thank my loving wife of 16 years, Michelle, and our three young daughters, Rachel, Rebecca, and Leah. We have a fourth child due in March—things just keep getting better and better. I feel lucky just to know Michelle and to have ever even met her in the first place. She is so much more to me than my wife—she is my very best friend, my soulmate, and my constant proof of God's love.

As you can plainly see, I am not a self-made man. I have had a lot of help along the way. I feel very blessed to have the life that I have, doing work that I enjoy, with people I love. Thank you all for this great, great honor. God bless you.



Aimee Kirsch, Rob Kubick, Melissa Bestgen, Cindy Thompson