

Press Release

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Local educators honored for youth workforce endeavors

The Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC) recognized two local educators at its May 13 Board of Directors meeting. Darryl Eccleston, *Dropout Prevention Coordinator* at Vancouver School District and Diane English, *Counselor* at Battle Ground High School were honored with the “Workforce Friendly Educator” award for their exceptional commitment and support of youth in developing educational and workforce skills. In its third year, the awards acknowledge the influence staff has on youth and their view and understanding of the workplace.

Award winners were selected based on their knowledge, appreciation and promotion of workforce education issues for students; their efforts to link students and their families to other community resources that support workforce preparedness, such as the Youth Workforce Program, WorkSource, community colleges, and other career and technical education activities; and a deep commitment to helping youth succeed.

2009 award winners are as follows:

Darryl Eccleston, Dropout Prevention Coordinator, Vancouver School District

Darryl has spent the last several years working with Vancouver School District’s Youth Program and Drop-Out Prevention program. A retired educator, his commitment to helping the most disenfranchised students succeed is beyond the pale. He not only helps students navigate their personal and academic struggles, he understands the world of work and the workforce resource in our community and how to help students see that their high school experience is the gateway to the future. He is tireless in his outreach to students, dropping by their homes to get them reengaged, breaking down barriers and stressing the value of work readiness skills. Darryl has saved many youth in his days; his commitment, persistence, and advocacy for youth makes him a role model and “rock of support” to all.

Diane English, Counselor, Battle Ground High School

Diane is recognized for her commitment to seeing beyond students’ outward behaviors and recognizing the underlying issues. She offers solutions for students and families who have struggled with the high school experience, and works along side the students and their families to

ensure progress. Even though Diane has several hundred students to attend to, she is recognized for spending the time needed to help students navigate life's rough spots while at the same time providing advice on careers and next steps.

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The Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC) provides leadership and resources to increase economic development with a trained and productive workforce in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum Counties. Led by a diverse board of representatives from business, labor, community-based organizations and government agencies, the SWWDC responds to the unique needs of our greater community. SWWDC funds approximately \$5 million in workforce programs annually in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties which are administered through community partners including Educational Service District 112 and WorkSource centers in Vancouver and Kelso. This summer, as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, an additional \$2.2 million for a summer youth employment program is being administered through seven community partners and an additional \$2.7 million will support training for low-income adults and dislocated workers. For more information, visit www.swwdc.org.