

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Early educators honored for earning degrees during Night of the Stars

ASHEBORO, N.C. (May 21, 2021) — Randolph Partnership for Children (RPC) announces eleven early educators were honored Thursday evening at the 18th annual Night of the Stars event held at the Randolph Community College Archdale Center.

Night of the Stars honors early educators in Randolph County who have completed degrees in their field during the past year. During the 2020-2021 year, nine early educators earned Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degrees in Early Childhood Education. Two earned Bachelor of Science (BS) Degrees in Human Development and Family Studies.

Serving as Master of Ceremonies of was County Commissioner Hope Haywood, who is also an RPC Board Director. Serving as awards presenter was Debi Laguieruela, RPC Board Secretary and co-owner of Trinity Furniture.

The keynote speaker was Tanya Dennis, who addressed the theme for the evening, "From Chaos to Clarity: Building Connections."

In the wake of the pandemic, Dennis noted the state of child care came into full focus, including low compensation and lack of health insurance coverage for teachers, many of whom also qualify for food stamps and Medicaid. To the audience of teachers, she said, "You must tell your story. You must share what you've been through. Your voice matters." She also urged everyone to continue their education, listing resources that can help pay for AAS, BS, and M.Ed. degrees. "For our children to be equipped (for a global economy), you have to be equipped," she said.

Receiving recognition for earning AAS degrees were Kelly Robertson of Creative Kids Preschool and Childcare Center, Alejandra Miramontes of Harmony Place, Allison Freitas of Randleman Enrichment Center, Taylor Kemp of Shepherd's Way Day School, Eblin Chavarria of Shepherd's Way Day School, Linley Johnson of Shepherd's Way Day School, Vanessa Martinez of Teddy Bear Child Care Center, Neida Fiscal of The Growing Place, and Lizette Tornero of The Growing Place.

Receiving recognition for earning BS degrees were Brittany Delk of Shepherd's Way Day School and Jamie Perez of Teddy Bear Child Care Center.

At the close of the evening, Executive Director Lisa Hayworth announced the creation of the Susan Harris Helsabeck Scholarship Fund in honor of Helsabeck, who passed away unexpectedly earlier this year. Helsabeck served as Professional Development Specialist for RPC and was responsible for the Night of the Stars event in that role. The scholarship will be awarded



PRESS RELEASE

annually to a Randolph County early educator at the Night of the Stars events beginning in 2022.

The outdoor celebration was held in a drive-in format with 80 in attendance. In addition to this year's graduates, those who were recognized at the 2020 virtual Night of the Stars event were invited to participate as honorees. Night of the Stars is traditionally a banquet event, but was restructured in 2020 as virtual in response to the pandemic. In 2022, RPC plans to return to an in-person banquet event.

The Night of the Stars event is planned each year by a committee of child care professionals and RPC staff. This year's committee members were Andee Edelson, Emily Farr, Joy Johnson, Rebecca Jordan, Liz McLeod, Jamie Perez, Stephanie Rietschel, Heather Semler, Jennifer Spencer, Kristy Umfleet, and Scarlet Welborn.

Door prize donors included Angela and Brian Cox, Hamilton's Steakhouse, Hatch Early Learning, Kaplan Early Learning Company, Lakeshore Learning, Nella Boutique, and Positano's Restaurant. Decorations were provided by Joy Johnson and Margie and Paul Trogon.

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About the Randolph Partnership for Children: Since 1999, Randolph Partnership for Children (RPC), a non-profit organization, has been the community's lead organization for young children and their families. RPC brings together diverse agencies, individuals, organizations, and communities to ensure all children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed in school and life. RPC is a United Way agency. For more information, visit www.randolphkids.org.

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PHOTOS (5)



Jamie Perez of Teddy Bear Child Care Center was recognized for earning her Bachelor of Science degree.



County Commissioner Hope Haywood, left, served as Master of Ceremonies and Debi Lagueruela served as awards presenter.



Keynote speaker Tanya Dennis at the 2021 Night of the Stars.



Executive Director Lisa Hayworth speaks to early educators at Night of the Stars.



Executive Director Lisa Hayworth announces the Susan Harris Helsabeck Scholarship Fund.