

Rotary acknowledges outstanding teachers

WHEN COVID-19 reared its ugly head at the end of 2019, it coughed up an entirely new set of challenges for our teachers, forcing them to adopt new modes of teaching. It was uber timely then that the Rotary Club of Altona City, Vic, had established the Hobsons Bay Rotary Teacher Awards program in 2018.

Focusing on early career stage teachers, experienced teachers, and teams, the awards recognise and encourage outstanding performance in local schools.

Award founder, Past District Governor and former Principal at Baden Powell College, Julie Mason, said it has never been more important to support and honour teachers.

"There is a great synergy between the education sector and Rotary. Both institutions are involved in developing student agency and leadership. We all want students to thrive. Our self-sacrificing teachers went beyond expectations in a crisis situation to achieve this."

"Fear and the pressures of a pandemic, coupled with the requirements placed on teachers in this new environment where schools suddenly closed their doors, was unprecedented. They

had to pivot between onsite and online remote learning, while supporting students' families and, in many cases, having to home-school their own children. It is important that we acknowledge their work."

The 2021 awards were facilitated via Zoom on October 18. It was a powerful event, telling stories of passion, dedication and relationship building that went beyond the student/teacher relationship and into the families.

Altona College nominated early career stage teachers Megan Clerkin, Blair Clearihan-Jervies and Zoe Harrison for encouragement awards. Their nominations highlighted exceptional starts to their teaching careers, working proactively with students and parents to cement strong home/school partnerships for remote learning.

In their second year of teaching, Olivia Hall and Sarah Hamilton from Bayside P-12 College were also nominated for encouragement awards. The fact that most of their career has been spent in remote learning didn't dampen their enthusiasm

and they innovated creative ways to engage students online.

Encouragement awards also went to Amy Wilson-Matesvac and Keenan Gatens from Emmanuel College, and Rachel Cullen and Benjamin Landolina from Wembley Primary School.

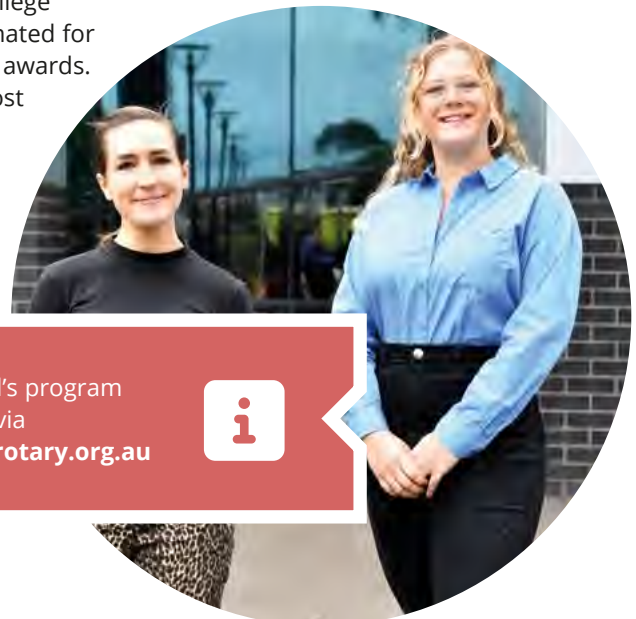
Candice DeChalain from Wembley Primary School was presented with an achievement award for her dexterity in dealing with a challenging student on a minute-by-minute basis, while continuing to execute her responsibilities to the rest of the class.

The team awards recognise teacher groups who collaborate to address an important school challenge. Wembley shone once more, with its Year 1 team creating methods to develop students' social skills while continuing to deliver quality education, while the school's Year 6 team went to extraordinary lengths to support students at risk of disengaging through creating differentiated learning opportunities across various subjects. RDU

"There is a great synergy between the education sector and Rotary. Both institutions are involved in developing student agency and leadership. We all want students to thrive. Our self-sacrificing teachers went beyond expectations in a crisis situation to achieve this."

RIGHT:

Bayside College Newport campus teachers Sarah Hamilton and Olivia Hall.
(Photo: Damjan Janevski/Star Weekly)



Any Rotary clubs or districts interested in implementing a teacher award's program in 2022 can contact Bryan Goodwin from the Rotary Club of Altona City via bgoodwin@bigpond.com. For more information, visit www.altonacityrotary.org.au

