

Military children, regional educators inspire Excellence in Education Honors at Army War College

By Robert Martin 30 April 2019



Carlisle school district honorees (left to right) Walt Pond; Michelle Disbrow; Janet Scott; Tina Kimbark; Keith Colestock; Matt Freeman and Abigail Leidigh stand with Maj. Gen. John Kem, Commandant of the Army War College, April 29.

Local educators, administrators and support staff of five local school districts, Carlisle Christian Academy, Saint Patrick's School and, Trinity High School recognized those who have inspired a love of learning in students and the understanding of military children at the Excellence in Education event at Quarters One on April 29.

Hosted by Maj. Gen. and Mrs. John Kem, Army War College Commandant, the event recognized superstars in education who ease the transition and enable military children to be successful, even if they are only here for one school year:

- Keith Lavala, Lindsay Graham and William Wonders (Big Spring School District)

- Walt Bond, Janet Scott, Stacy Loose, Keith Colestock, Linda Fitzpatrick, Tina Kimbark and Michelle Disbrow (Carlisle Area School District)
- Doris Baboian, Maggie Stern, Derek Hockenberry, Jennifer Forysth, and Lori Rauenzahn (Cumberland Valley School District)
- Brian Chubb, Jennifer Rogosky and Joseph Reidy (Mechanicsburg School District)
- Christine Bozart, Angela Mentzer, Stephanie Jaymes, and Samantha Moses (South Middleton School District)
- David Geise and, Janice Kiker (Trinity High School)
- Rose Butler and Mary Gronkiewicz (Saint Patrick School)
- Kim Hiles and Kami Kump (Carlisle Christian Academy).

Dr. Richard Fry, Superintendent of Big Spring School District and President of the Pennsylvania State Administrators Association was the guest speaker for the event.

“We have an amazing opportunity to welcome students, on a yearly basis, who come to us from a variety of educational backgrounds,” said Fry. “This variety provides us with diversity of thought, diversity of expectations, diversity of experiences and it allows our traditional students to be exposed to life outside the valley. Quite frankly, it can be life-changing for our students and our staff.

“Whether from Texas, New York, Alabama, or one of our Foreign Fellow families, the diversity of life you bring to our doors helps us grow as an educational entity. For that, we are deeply thankful,” said Fry.

The Army War College sponsors the annual reception to highlight the unique relationship between schools and the military children who live a life of many moves and many school transitions.

“The biggest value military children bring to our classroom is experience,” said William Wonders, the Principal for Newville Elementary. “The knowledge of what is outside of our school district, and how that can be used to enhance the learning of children around them. Many of our students are just exposed to what’s around them.

“To have someone that can share their experiences, other places and

events is huge, I think that's the biggest positive factor that the military child can bring to their classroom," he said.

Barbara Clemmer of the Pennsylvania Dept. of Education represented the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission, organized to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of frequent moves and deployment of their parents.

"I am the military family education liaison. When a school district has a question about a military family member and their exceptions, the school district would turn to me for guidance," said Clemmer.

"For example, a family may have a child that is enrolled in kindergarten at a younger age that is permissible in the state of Pennsylvania. So when they move to Pennsylvania we have to honor and accept that child in kindergarten."

"Military children bring a diverse set of experiences. They have the ability in a unique way to be able to interact and adjust to change that some other students don't have," she said.

Carlisle Barracks singled out, as well, several honorees who complement the K-12 educators with pre-school and after-school programs:

- Alex Romanias and Hilary Winnemore (McConnell Youth Center)
- Phyllis Benson and Jennifer Gilliam (Moore Child Development Center at Carlisle Barracks)
- Jessica Weibley and Jamie Yearger (Tieman CDC at Letterkenny Army Depot).