

Four educators won the Special Education **Make a Difference Award** from the Macomb County's Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) in 2018. These awards are especially meaningful because students and their parents nominated their favorite educators for the honor.

CONGRATULATIONS

*to this year's winners from the
Macomb County Parent Advisory Committee:*

**Lake Shore School District
Rodgers Elementary School**



**Fierce. Determined. No stone unturned.
Whatever it takes. I will try anything!**

These words describe **Kelly Gattuso** and her efforts to reach, assist, shape, and teach her students. Kelly works in a split assignment between regular ECSE and MOCI ECSE. In addition to completing her CI Master's Degree, Kelly serves on the Board of Education at South Lake Schools. Her little ones offer extraordinary challenges and each and every day, Kelly rises to those challenges. She provides support and encouragement and most importantly, hope to the parents of her students. Kelly is an ardent, passionate, and relentless advocate for services she feels will better the lives of her students and is well deserving of the "Make a Difference Award". Congratulations Kelly!

**Chippewa Valley Schools
Cheyenne Elementary School**



Kristen Gersch has been a teacher in Chippewa Valley Schools since October of 2013. She completed her undergraduate degree from Wayne State University with an endorsement in Cognitive Impairment and holds a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Oakland University. She is an asset to the Cheyenne Elementary team and makes those around her better people. Kristen's kind, gentle, and warm personality is apparent through the many relationships she has fostered over the years. She epitomizes what the "Make a Difference" award represents, as she has made a positive impact in the classroom and the community.

**Macomb Intermediate School District
Keith Bovenschen School**



Kristen Krawczyk teaches elementary-age children with Severe Multiple Impairments at Keith Bovenschen School. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from Wayne State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in 2009. She also holds a teaching endorsement in Elementary Education, as well as Cognitive Impairment. She earned this degree while being a stay-at-home mom over the course of ten years. In only her second year of teaching, it is evident that Kristen's passion and love for teaching comes from within her kind heart. In building rapport and trust with her students, she is able to help them to be the best that they can be. In addition to building relationships, Kristen volunteers her time at her own children's schools, as well as at Bovenschen. Giving back to these communities shows her devotion to others. Kristen does make a difference, not only to her students, but to their families.

**Utica Community Schools
Eisenhower High School**



Valerie Thomas is a 20-year employee of the Utica Community Schools. Mrs. Thomas has a passion for working in the community and loves working with kids. In her role as a paraprofessional, Valerie excels at developing strong relationships with the student she supports. Valerie truly cares for the individual needs of her students and goes above and beyond the expectations of her position to be well prepared. She has a tremendous heart and always has a smile on her face. Her gentle demeanor and positive outlook are infectious and assets that set her apart as she “Makes a Difference” in lives of our students, one child at a time.