



Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
Golden Apple Award | March 2, 2015

Kelly King

One of the more challenging tasks that we face is educating our homeless students. Because of the extraordinary effort and dedication of Kelly King, KPBSD homeless liaison, the district is able to do its best to meet this challenge.

Ms. Kelly King came to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District in 2008. In the past seven years she has literally worn her car out traveling from one end of the peninsula to the other to offer support to families and youth in transition. A lifelong Kenai resident, Kelly understands the unique characteristics of our communities. She continually goes well above her job expectations to develop strong, respectful relationships with local and state agencies in order to provide the very best assistance possible for her clients.

The task of the homeless liaison is not a high profile position and it does not garner a lot of attention. King doesn't need those accolades; she truly has a heart for families and youth finding themselves in difficult times. The goal of the Students in Transition Program is to provide consistent, uninterrupted education so that students can succeed in school. Kelly takes this goal to heart; during her time as homeless liaison, she has watched many of her unaccompanied youth make it through high school, graduate on time, and go on to college or enroll in vocational education. In a typical year, she supports approximately 300 students. It is not uncommon for her to receive a thank you—sometimes years later—from a former student or parent who expresses appreciation for the difference she made during a difficult time.

She works outside her 8:00-5:00 work day or work week to provide emergency supplies, or put documentation in place to help her clients continue their K-12 education without interruption. Kelly thinks outside of the box and determines a way to help students get what they need in order to succeed and stay in school. She continually works to raise awareness and get the community involved; examples include the annual Vigil for Youth and Family Homelessness, working with students and schools to increase advocacy and outreach, and to maintain a KPBSD Students in Transition Facebook page to keep the community updated. Kelly's work to raise community awareness has long reaching impact. In 2013 two students from Kenai Middle School learned about young people who are homeless on the Kenai Peninsula. The boys decided to combine their birthday party and asked guests to bring a present or gift card that would benefit youth and teens in the KPBSD SIT program. This past year, the student government at Kenai Central High School worked with Kelly to provide education and create a community fundraiser, students at Skyview Middle School sponsored a Penny War, and most recently students from Nikiski Middle-High School raised almost \$3,000 to assist youth who are homeless and want to stay in school. KPBSD is very proud of the work Kelly does and is pleased she received the Knight in Shining Armor from the community in 2013.

Forging partnerships with many organizations and area businesses, Kelly has presented at the Student Council Conference, Rotary meetings, and collaborates with Covenant House in Anchorage, Love Inc., and other service agencies, just to name a few. Her beautiful smile and attitude helps put students at ease—they know they have found someone who truly cares, and that makes all the difference.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education is proud to recognize Kelly King for her dedication to the students of the school district—past, present, and future.