

Introducing the Three Newest Educators in the MEA Family



I never thought I was going to be a teacher. I thought I was going to be a musician. When I took this “gig” as a music teacher at Marston 13 years ago, I didn’t expect it to last. I am still here because I love teaching and I plan to always be a teacher.

— 2012 Milken Educator Gus Carlson

Week two of the Milken Educator Awards took us to New England where some innovative educators are using their strengths to help students overcome their weaknesses. For musician-turned-teacher Gus Carlson, it’s using music to engage kids on everything from language to science and math (and, of course, the performing arts). For Yanaiza Gallant, It’s all about teaching kids to believe in themselves. This Cuban-born reading specialist was told by a counselor that she wasn’t college material, yet credits a special teacher with giving her the self-confidence and motivation to strive for more— an inspiration that she joyously passes on to her students every day. Yanaiza put it best in her interview with WPRI (CBS) Providence:

“Even though there were people around who may have tried to bring me down, he saw something in me and that’s what I try to do for our kids, see something in them, see something positive, bring that out and just believe in them, because some of them don’t have anybody that believes in them.”

For principal Allan Cameron, the “personal touch” is more than a slogan, it’s a way of life. A former military man, Allan believes in discipline, but from a place of connection and mutual respect. He greets every one of his students as they come to school in the morning and takes the time to get to know them — their strengths and their weaknesses — so that he can monitor their progress and respond as needed. When Allan was asked about the impact of receiving an MEA at a party he inadvertently planned for himself, he responded, “I will use this great honor as a motivator to keep working hard and striving for excellence.”

One of the added bonuses of notifications is reconnecting with the family of Milken Educators in the area who come out to support the new inductee. At Gus Carlson’s MEA presentation in New Hampshire, Dr. Jane Foley (IN ’94) caught up with Jillian Brickley (NH ’10), who shared the personal challenge that being a Milken Educator placed on her. “When I got the Milken Award and saw how other people reacted to hearing that I was a ‘Milken,’ I knew I needed to ‘step up to the plate’ and so I take every chance I can to have a voice for education and my students.”

Photo credits (from left): 1 and 2, Milken Family Foundation; photo 3, courtesy the Massachusetts Dept. of Education

Latest Milken Educator Award Recipients

[August “Gus” Carlson](#)
Music

Adeline C. Marston School
Hampton, NH

[Yanaiza Gallant](#)

Reading Specialist
Lillian Feinstein Elementary
School
Providence, RI

[Dr. Allan Cameron, Jr.](#)
Principal

Deerfield Elementary School
Westwood, MA