“The scoreboard’s not working today for some reason,” said Anthony Forneris, physical education teacher at SSD’s Northview High School. But on this day, the score of the games takes a back seat to the rest of the game day activities.

Several times per year, Forneris organizes a character-based basketball event for the whole school.

Northview does not have a traditional basketball team like most other high schools, which is what spurred Forneris to start the Character Basketball program. Students sign up to play, and are split into several teams based on their basketball abilities. But to remain on the team, they have to stay in good standing with their grades, behavior and character.

“If a teacher catches you doing things right, you can get points toward playing,” said Jay, a student player. “But if I’m acting up, I can get taken off the team.”

And for students who don’t like to play basketball?

“We also have about 20–25 very loud cheerleaders,” Forneris said. “It’s the talk of the school when we have these games. Everyone comes to the gym to have a good time with it.”

But it’s not just Northview staff and students who participate. Forneris has worked with other schools in the area to bring students to play the Northview squads or to host Northview at their school.

“My favorite is when we play other schools,” Jay said. “We get to make new friends and ask questions of the other players.”

When another school isn’t available to play, Forneris invites first responders to Northview for games and interactions with each other.

On this November afternoon, students prepared a pre-game lunch and visited with members from the Florissant Police Department before splitting up into teams that combined students and police officers on each squad.

“These games are as great for us as they are for the kids,” said Timothy Lowery, former Florissant police chief and current Florissant mayor. “It’s good for us to be able to interact in a different way with students.”

But with everything, it comes down to character — even on the court.

“Character crosses into the game,” Forneris said, noting that games can sometimes get highly competitive, but students always remain respectful on the court, even if there is a hard foul or close call on a play.

“We can’t have disrespectful students representing our school,” said Chris, who is a second-year captain of the cheerleading squad. “We get to show sportsmanship, be kind, show our best effort and have fun!”

Forneris said the Character Basketball program is part of the school’s overall commitment to character education.

“It’s part of several things we do here on character,” Forneris said. “But students are definitely aware of how it fits in, and know that they can lose the privilege of playing if they don’t stay on top of things. We had a student last year miss several games, and this year he’s improved his behavior and has been able to play much more often.”

A technical difficulty might have kept the scoreboard from working, but in the end, the lessons students learned from these games far outweighed the score.
On April 4, 2019, SSD recognized the outstanding achievements of local students at the annual Commitment to Kids banquet. This year, 21 students received the Rosemary Zander Award. Others were honored with financial scholarships for college.

The Rosemary Zander Award has long recognized the accomplishments of students receiving services from SSD. Since 1988, students have been honored for success in a variety of categories — academics, arts, athletics, communications, vocational training, employment, independent living skills, community service and extracurricular activities.

Each of the 2019 award recipients has diverse achievements and has had varied challenges to meet and overcome. And they all have demonstrated the central mission of SSD — all students can learn, succeed and contribute to our community.

Read about several of this year’s Rosemary Zander Award recipients below. To learn more about each award winner’s inspiring story, visit http://bit.ly/C2K2019 to read their individual profiles and watch a video featuring the honorees.

**STUDENTS HONORED FOR ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Jacob Bartola**

Jacob Bartola is an inspiration to all of those around him with his joyful spirit and dedication to learning. He is a fifth-grader at Blades Elementary School in the Mehlville School District and receives services from SSD.

Jake has surmounted numerous health obstacles throughout his young life. He has proven to be a great role model to his peers, and he has made great academic progress.

“Jake arrives to school every day with a smile on his face, and he possesses a laugh and positive attitude that is contagious,” said Nancy Wamser, an occupational therapist at Blades who co-nominated Jake for the Rosemary Zander Award. “He perseveres and keeps trying in spite of his challenges.”

Jake participates in Special Olympics and is a member of the Hugs 4 Life Club at Blades, in which students participate in activities that foster empathy, compassion and respect for others.

“Jake lights up a room with his enthusiasm and hard work,” said Wamser. “He is a real treasure.”

**Ciara Brothers**

When it comes to impressive high school résumés, Ciara Brothers has one that would impress anyone who might read it. She’s an honor roll student in the classroom, volunteers her time in the community, and takes part in numerous clubs and organizations.

Ciara attends North Technical High School in the Web and Computer Programming program where she has earned a perfect 4.0. She also is a half-day student at Hazelwood Central High School where she holds a 3.9 cumulative GPA.

Ciara is an ambassador for her program at North Tech, giving tours to prospective students and talking to parents during open house functions. She works with younger children as a volunteer at the Magic House and as a math tutor, and is also regularly called upon to assist classmates with assignments.

Ciara is a member of SkillsUSA where she competed in the Web Design category. She took second place during district competition last year and her team finished in the top five at the state level. She is also a member of Future Business Leaders of America, National Technical Honor Society, Renaissance, and DECA (formerly Distributive Education Clubs of America) — where she placed second at the district level. She is also a talented clarinet player in the band — earning a second place finish for her solo at the district level.

**Brandon Moreno**

Brandon Moreno has set a high standard for work ethic in SSD’s Community-Based Vocational Instruction (CBVI) program.

Brandon is a senior at SSD’s Southview School, and has worked at a number of CBVI sites, including Ronnie’s Plaza, China 1 and Delmar Gardens.

According to his Rosemary Zander Award nominator, SSD teacher Rebecca Seger, Brandon is a classroom leader and friend. “Brandon excels with accuracy and pride at his jobs,” she said. “And his smile speaks a thousand words. He brings joy to all of the people he serves.”

Brandon is a role model at Southview when it comes to communication. He not only understands English, but also Spanish, which is his family’s language. He uses some American sign language as well as an augmentative communication device.

“Brandon is the guy who has achieved all that is set before him, with a smile and determination,” said Seger.
2019 ROSEMARY ZANDER AWARD RECIPIENTS

CYDNEY ALGEE
Hazelwood West High School/
North Technical High School,
Hazelwood School District/SSD

AESHAL ALI
Rockwood Summit High School/
South Technical High School,
Rockwood School District/SSD

MAVRICK ALTMAN
Pattersonville High School/
North Technical High School,
Pattersonville School District/SSD

MATHEW BARTHOLOMEW
Lindbergh High School,
Lindbergh Schools

JACOB BARTOLA
Blades Elementary School,
Mehlville School District

ELLIE GLASER
Barretts Elementary School,
Parkway Schools

JOSEPH HAYNES, JR.
Lindbergh High School/
South Technical High School,
Lindbergh Schools/SSD

JACOB BARTOLA
Blades Elementary School,
Mehlville School District

ELLIE GLASER
Barretts Elementary School,
Parkway Schools

JOSEPH HAYNES, JR.
Lindbergh High School/
South Technical High School,
Lindbergh Schools/SSD

NICOLAS BOSNICH
North Technical High School,
Mehlville School District/SSD

SAMUEL P. GREGORY
North Technical High School,
Mehlville School District/SSD

JAYLYN HAUCK
Parkway North High School/
South Technical High School,
Parkway Schools/SSD

PHOEBE McFARLAND
Hixson Middle School,
Webster Groves School District

BRANDON MORENO
Southview School, SSD

HALIMA NAQIBULLAH
Rockwood Summit High School/
South Technical High School,
Rockwood School District/SSD

SAMUEL STEWART
North Technical High School, SSD

MARKELL TOMPKINS
University City High School,
The School District of University City

YVONNA WALKER
Mehlville Senior High School,
Mehlville School District

Special Education Foundation

Congratulations

Congratulations to the 2019 graduates of the Fred Saigh Leadership Program and the 2019 John Cary and Christopher Davis scholars. The yearlong Leadership Program curriculum introduces, fosters and develops leadership skills through involving students in issues that face the community. John Cary Scholarship recipients are outstanding students with disabilities who reflect the characteristics most admired by late SSD superintendent John Cary — resiliency, courage and determination. This year’s John Cary scholars are:

- **Aisha Ali**, South Technical High School, SSD
- **Natalie Littich**, South Technical High School, SSD
- **Lindsay Perrett**, South Technical High School, SSD
- **Carson Sears**, Valley Park High School, Valley Park School District
- **Kaylee Todd**, Eureka High School, Rockwood School District

The Christopher Davis scholar is **Shekinah Este** of Ritenour High School.

Congratulations to Northview High School for winning the Red Apple award for the SSD school that sold the most raffle tickets associated with our 2018 Dan McLaughlin Golf Tournament.

Friend of Education

The Missouri National Education Association recognized the Special Education Foundation with a 2019 Horace Mann Friend of Education Award in the civic organizational achievement category. These awards, the highest given by Missouri NEA, recognize outstanding contributions to public education. The SEF won the award in the same category in 2013.

Thank You!

The 10th Annual Women Leaders Boutique, Luncheon and Fashion Show was a big success, thanks to sponsors and guests. Revenues of more than $28,000 exceeded the previous year by more than $6,000. Visit [http://bit.ly/sef_video](http://bit.ly/sef_video) to watch a video produced by students at SSD’s Northview High School that describes projects supported by proceeds from the event. Each September, principals from SSD’s five special education schools present proposed projects that would enhance the educational experiences of their students. For information about joining the SEF’s Women Leaders group, email [jeanine@sef-stl.org](mailto:jeanine@sef-stl.org).

2019 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

**Allison M. Haake Memorial Scholarship**

**KARLY ANTHONY-PETTER**
Kirkwood High School, Kirkwood School District

**Bonhomme Lions Scholarships**

**ALEXANDRA BLAKE**
Marquette High School, Rockwood School District

**SEYOON CHOI**
Parkway Central High School, Parkway Schools

**JAYLYN HAUCK**
Parkway North High School/South Technical High School, Parkway Schools/SSD

**NAKAILAH SHIELDS-ROBINSON**
Webster Groves High School/South Technical High School, Webster Groves Schools District/SSD

**TYANNA WOODBURY**
Hazelwood West High School, Hazelwood School District

**SSD James E. Westbury Memorial Board of Education Scholarships**

(Sponsored by Thomeczek & Brink, LLC)

**ALYSSA SPALDING**
Oakville Senior High School/South Technical High School, Mehlville School District/SSD

**JACOB WITT**
Affton High School/South Technical High School, Affton School District/SSD
SSD Parent Advisory Council

The SSD Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is comprised of families advising and collaborating to improve the education, confidence and social outcomes of each student served by SSD.

The PAC consists of five parents or guardians — one member and four alternates — from each of the 22 St. Louis County school districts and from each of the five SSD special education schools. The parents or guardians of students receiving special education services in that district or school elect SSD PAC members.

For more information, visit the PAC’s website at tinyurl.com/SSDPAC, email pac@ssdmo.org or call 314.989.8448 ext. 6650.