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KENTUCKY SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND ANNOUNCES LANGAN AWARD WINNER

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – The Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) presented the Paul J. Langan Distinguished Service Award Tuesday, May 8, during its Founder's Day Program at the school's Louisville campus.

The Langan Award, considered the school's highest honor, was presented to Connie Hill, a low vision specialist at the school. The award was established in 1992 and is dedicated to former superintendent Paul J. Langan (1945-56) in recognition of his outstanding service and constructive leadership. Langan's innovative approach to education established the foundation for continued improvement of the education of blind and visually impaired children at the school.

Hill, who has worked with blind and visually impaired students for more than 21 years, received two nominations which included accolades from many colleagues and students.

"Connie has a wonderful understanding of what the students need in order to be successful in life," said Ann Boyd, lead teacher for the visually impaired at Fayette County schools who nominated Hill. "She sees the potential of each student and encourages each to reach for their goals to be a success."

Hill began her career at KSB as a swimming and recreation teacher in 2000 and was then hired as a community-based instruction teacher. In that role, Hill focused on teaching her students job skills and created partnerships with 15 local business where students could put their skills to use.

Since 2014, Hill has been a low vision specialist at the school, where she continues to make a positive impact on the lives of Kentucky students who are blind and visually impaired. She coordinates low vision clinics, volunteers in the residential program and drives students to work-skills program sites.

During her time at KSB, Hill also created a transition dorm program to help high school students learn independent living skills such as meal preparation and shopping, often spending the night in the dorm to ensure that students were prepared for independence after graduation.

"You will often find Connie either in the practical living lab working with a group of students on cooking skills, in the hallways working with students on compensatory and/or travel skills, or assisting students in and outside of the classroom with their low-vision devices or other assistive technology devices," said Anna Freeman, KSB school psychologist.

(more)

“Her contribution to KSB and our students is invaluable.”

Hill’s dedication to blind and visually impaired students stretches beyond KSB. In the past two years, she has increased the number of low vision clinics that travel to Kentucky’s education cooperative regions, thus accommodating more students and their families. Hill also has worked with doctors to provide services to students when they do not have access to KSB.

Before coming to Kentucky, Hill taught in West Virginia where she won numerous awards, including: Elementary Physical Education Teacher of the Year in 1990, Special Olympics Coach of the Year in 1997, Young Professional Award in Physical Education in 1989 and Outstanding Mentor Award for Elementary Physical Education Teachers for the 1999-2000 school year.

Hill earned a bachelor’s degree in physically handicapped/physical education, a master’s degree in school guidance counseling and a master’s degree in health and physical education from Marshall University. Since arriving at KSB, she has acquired certifications as a teacher of the visually impaired/functional mental disability from the University of Louisville, low vision rehabilitation from Salus University in Pennsylvania and is currently working on orientation and mobility certification, also from Salus. In 2006, she was inducted into the Marshall University Sports Medicine Hall of Fame. Hill also has spoken at state and national Association of Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired conferences.

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