

Teachers to be recognized at event



The Eighth Annual Martin Luther King Day of Service Event hosted by the S. Delois Mayes Scholarship Foundation will recognize two Suffolk Public Schools teachers for their dedication, especially during the pandemic.

Each year, the S. Delois Mayes Scholarship Foundation bestows the Community Leadership Award during its annual fundraising event. This year, the recipients are Claudette Pierre and Violene Sharpe.

Pierre is a special education teacher at John Yeates Middle School with 20 years of teaching under her belt. She was nominated by Sabrina Turner, the guidance counselor at her school. The nomination was brought before the board along with the many others before being chosen.

"I have no words," said Pierre. "I am in total shock and awe that someone recognized what I was doing. It feels wonderful to know my work is being

seen past the four walls of the school.”

Last school year, Pierre taught her students both virtually and in person. Due to working with students with intellectual disabilities and autism, it was important for her to keep a consistent schedule. So during a year everyone felt thrown off-schedule and a bit lost, Pierre helped her students adjust to their new routine and, according to her, “they were troopers.”

Pierre also thanked the parents for helping during this time, as many were on the virtual learning calls to help the students stay engaged and keep on track in their work.

Other services she has done for students include teaching in the SPS Saturday School Academy for students needing additional academic support due to closures during the pandemic. She also helped a French-speaking student to learn English.

“Everything I do is what I’m supposed to do and what I need to do,” said Pierre.

Sharpe is a math teacher at Lakeland High School with more than 20 years of experience. She not only helps students succeed in the classroom but also outside of it.

“I don’t consider anything I do to be anything extraordinary,” said Sharpe. “I sincerely see it as a part of my job.”

Wanting to see her students academically succeed, Sharpe helps with college tours and community volunteer efforts and provides tutoring for those who need extra help.

In addition, Sharpe works to see students succeed outside of academics. She supports her students in their extracurricular activities and programs.

Sharpe attends plays, sporting events and more to give students support. She has also worked with youth at East End Baptist Church for more than 20 years.

"I try to be available to be there for my students and support the programs they are in," said Sharpe. "It's part of what I do, not extra."

These women will receive their awards at the Eighth Annual Martin Luther King Day of Service Event, which will take place virtually at 10 a.m. on Jan. 17. The keynote speaker will be Suffolk's new Commonwealth's Attorney, Narendra Pleas.

This is a fundraising event for the S. Delois Mayes Scholarship Foundation, which provides scholarships to Suffolk Public Schools seniors each year. To learn more, donate or watch the live stream, visit sdmscholarshipfoundation.com.