Congratulations to Ann Pulkkinen!

2018 WASSW Distinguished School Social Work Advocate of the Year Award Winner!

The Washington Association of School Social Workers was honored to present the Distinguished School Social Work Advocate of the Year Award to Ann Pulkkinen at the NASW WA Chapter Social Work Month Celebration on March 1st, 2018. The Distinguished School Social Work Advocate award recognizes a community member who promotes and enhances the mission of school social work.

We are grateful for the partnership with the NASW WA Chapter which allowed us the opportunity to recognize and celebrate our award winner on this special evening.

Our award winner has a long-standing history in the field of social work, from teaching graduate level courses at the University of Washington since January 2000, to mentoring graduate and bachelor level social work students in field placements, to working for Child Protective Services, to consulting, reviewing, and directing Head Start programs, to volunteering as a Court Appointed Special Advocate, and to (of course) working as a school social worker.

In addition to her direct practice work, our award winner has been a constant advocate for the school social work profession throughout her career. Ann's advocacy for the profession reaches from bachelor and master's level students, to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, to the Professional Educators Standards Board, to various colleges and universities, to the Washington Education Association, and to numerous school districts in the state of Washington. She was also a WASSW board member from 1995 to 2010 and then again from 2014 to 2016.

Ann has been instrumental in advocating for the inclusion of the Social Work in Schools class in the graduate program at both the Seattle and Tacoma campuses of the University of Washington. There are only two universities in the State of Washington that offer this course and as a result some people often don't have the full picture of the profession. Ann makes sure that not only students, but faculty and staff members at the University of Washington know that the school social work profession is very much alive and that the workforce is actually growing in numbers in the state. WASSW rests a little bit easier knowing that she has a place at this very important table and that she does not hesitate to include WASSW in conversations.

Even in casual conversations, Ann advocates for our profession. For example, WASSW was looking for a new venue to hold our annual conference, and Ann was able to use her relationships and advocacy skills to secure the Washington Education Association building for free. Ann has generated many ideas over the years on how to increase our membership, how to celebrate our members during school social work week, how to strengthen relationships with organizations such as OPSI, NASW, WEA, and other support professionals. She has also been present for Lobby Day and the evolution of a very important piece of legislation that now defines the role of a school social worker in the state of Washington. Our profession is stronger in this state because of her.