

INSPIRATIONS

Spring 2009

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Illinois Chapter
National School Public Relations Association

Servant Leadership: Why you should serve on the INSPRA board

Message from President-Elect, Mindy Ward

Last fall, I attended the Wisconsin School Public Relations Association (WSPRA) conference, “The Power of One.” The keynote speaker was the CEO/President of a regional grocery store chain in the Green Bay area. I had heard great reviews about the grocery stores from our neighbors in Wisconsin, but after spending a fair amount of time as a retail manager, teacher, and small business owner prior to school communications, I questioned what I could take away from the presentation that would assist me in my current position. I understood best practices of retail product selection, display, advertising, and customer service. I had learned it, lived it, and taught it.

Much to my surprise and pleasure, the keynote was not about traditional retail management practices. The keynote was dedicated to the grocery store chain’s utilization and endorsement of the servant leadership philosophy. Based on the works of Robert Greenleaf, Festival Food’s corporate culture is successful because of its collaborative culture and dialogue among and between all levels of staff, as well as its commitment to on-going professional development. I began shopping there. I can testify that they walk the talk. After reading Greenleaf’s book, I can summarize that servant leadership is an on-going, life-long learning process.

Eleven characteristics, some inherent attributes or beliefs, identify a servant leader. Each of you has mastered some level of those characteristics. Regardless of your tenure in school public relations, communications or even INSPRA, you have what it takes to serve on the INSPRA board.

Deadline for board nominations is March 13. Officer and board member job descriptions, as well as a nomination form, are available on our website at www.inspra.org/content/about-us/officer-and-board-member-job-descriptions.

Come walk the talk. Join our team.

2009 Distinguished Service Awards - Nominations due March 13

INSPRA annually sponsors the Distinguished Service Awards program in an effort to help honor deserving supporters of local districts. This is a statewide program that brings recognition to the award recipient and to your school district. The awards ceremony will take place on Friday, May 1 at the Bolingbrook Golf Club.

This is your district’s chance to recognize the people who act on their roles as public relations ambassadors for education. An informational brochure has already been mailed to all INSPRA members.

Districts may submit one nomination per category. Categories include Administrator, Board of Education Member, Community Member, Faculty/Certified Staff, Parent, Public Relations Professional of the Year, Student, Support Staff, Team. Nominations must be submitted electronically as a Word document attachment, and the nomination form, in the brochure, must be faxed to the INSPRA office. Both the fax and the email must be received no later than midnight, March 13, 2009. Details can be found in the informational brochure. If you have misplaced your copy, the brochure can also be found on our website at www.inspra.org/content/programs/service-awards.

Don’t miss this opportunity to earn state recognition for your school district’s best supporters!

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(815) 464-3275

Who will be the 2009 PR professional of the year?

As part of the Distinguished Service Awards, the PR Professional of the Year is a new category created in 2007 to honor our own. As a group, public relations professionals tend to want to shine the spotlight on others, not themselves.

As the award category defines the professional who merits this award, "An individual whose career exemplifies the professional practices of school public relations and deserves recognition for an outstanding body of work on behalf of the school district and/or INSPRA/NSPRA."

Past Public Relations Professionals of the Year are:

2007 Stacy Holland - Lincoln-Way High School District 21

2008 Mindy Ward - Des Plaines Comm. Cons. School District 62

Know a school PR professional of this calibre? Nominate them for this prestigious award. Nomination information was recently mailed to all INSPRA members, or it can be found online at www.inspra.org/content/programs/service-awards.

Message from your INSPRA President

During a time when the nation is flooded with uncertainties surrounding our financial state, the need to keep our publics informed and educated is critical--now more than ever. I'm pleased to share that at 170, our membership is at its highest number in history. This number makes a clear statement regarding district awareness for the value of what we do as communications professionals, strategic advisors and crisis managers. It's imperative we maintain a high level of public accountability and ensure that we are doing all we can to develop two-way communications with all our publics, remembering our internal public above all else.

Our nation has entered a difficult cycle, but it is one that will pass. How we support our superintendents, manage our departments and maintain clear, consistent communications throughout this time is what will be remembered.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your President this year. On a personal note, some of you may know that I became a mother this year to my daughter, Gabriella Rae. Without the support from the Executive Board, I could not have fulfilled my role. I work with an incredible team of professionals who have volunteered their time, efforts and energy to this organization. To the Executive Board, I thank you. I have learned a great deal from all of you and am very fortunate to work alongside you. To the team of communications professionals that make up INSPRA, I encourage each of you to take the challenge, embraced the new and keep learning, so you may keep growing.

The words, "Be the Change" have echoed through our nation these past few months. Take those words and "Be the Voice". Be the voice for the districts, the staff and most of all, for the children. Plain and simple, they are the reason our professions exist.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit."
--Aristotle--

May the remainder of this school year be a successful one.

Jennifer Tempest Bova
President
Illinois Chapter, National School Public Relations Association