



**PRESS RELEASE  
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## **SPEF's 14th Annual Excellence in Education Awards Honored Gartner, Jack Bryant (Posthumously), and named Five 2021 SPEF Educators**

**STAMFORD, CT – March 29, 2021** – Stamford Public Education Foundation's 14th annual *Excellence in Education Awards* was an evening of celebration and inspiration as community leaders and educators were honored for their commitment to public education. This year's event took place virtually on **Thursday, March 25th, and streamed from [www.spefct.org](http://www.spefct.org)**.

Longtime SPEF supporter, ESPN broadcaster Arda Orcal once again served as master of ceremonies. The presentation included SPEF staff highlighting how programs are meeting the challenges brought on by the pandemic. In addition, SPEF board members, Stamford public school students, parents, teachers, and administrators delivered touching tributes to the 2021 award recipients:

- **SPEF Leadership Award:** Jack Bryant (posthumous), accepted by his son Jamar Greene, on behalf of the Bryant family
- **SPEF Community Giving Award:** Gartner, accepted by Jules Kaufman, EVP, General Counsel, Corporate Secretary
- **SPEF Educator Award:** 50+ nominations were received from SPS community members and the five winners are:
  - Katie Welsh, Davenport Ridge Elementary School
  - Luciana Lira, Hart Magnet Elementary School
  - Betsy DeSantis, Julia A. Stark Elementary School
  - Ryan Carey, SPS Anchor at Harbor Landing
  - Fred Kelley, Stamford High School

— MORE —

- **Stamford Public Schools Teacher of the Year:** Donna Kaiser, Stamford High  
*Teacher of the Year Finalists:* Judy Anker, Stillmeadow; Ashley Porter Collins, Westhill High,  
and *Spotlight Award Recipients:* Shakia (Kia) Amaro, Stillmeadow; Jillian Churchill, Cloonan;  
Kirsten Cianci, Anchor; Briana Coyle, Northeast; Nicole Ballantoni, Dolan.

SPEF is especially grateful to the **2021 Excellence in Education Awards** sponsors for their support for public education, including:

**Title Sponsor:** NatWest

**Magna Cum Laude:** First County Bank; Henkel; Pitney Bowes

**Cum Laude:** Berkowitz & Hanna; Carmody Torrance Sandak & Hennessey; Deloitte; Ferguson Library; Garden Homes Fund

**Honors:** Eleanor & Mort Lowenthal; Bob Phillips; PCM Fund; Stamford Bank & Trust; The Nellie Mae Education Foundation.

**Springtime Celebration:** SPEF is pleased to announce that this spring, contingent upon safety guidelines, it is planning an outside gathering: the first **Excellence Springtime Celebration** at Mill River Park on June 6th. This outdoor festival will once again honor award recipients and SPEF supporters, and will feature music from students, dance performances, art exhibits, picnic fare, and more! More information will be found on SPEF's website: [www.spefct.org](http://www.spefct.org).

**About SPEF:** Founded in 1996, the mission of the Stamford Public Education Foundation (SPEF) is to deliver educational programs and resources that elevate student, educator, and parent success by bridging the gap between needs in the Stamford Public Schools and resources in our community. The Foundation strives to enable each and every student in the Stamford Public Schools to graduate high school and enter college, career training, or fulltime employment ready to succeed. For further information, visit [www.spefct.org](http://www.spefct.org).

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