

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Highland Rotary Club Honors Inaugural Educator of the Year

Highland, IL — The Highland Rotary Club is proud to announce **Elizabeth “Liz” Grotefendt** of Alhambra Primary School as the recipient of the **2024-2025 Educator of the Year Award**. This newly established honor celebrates local educators who exemplify Rotary’s guiding principle of **“Service Above Self.”**

The Rotary Educator of the Year Award was created to recognize the incredible contributions of educators who go above and beyond in shaping the future of Highland’s youth. Principals from Highland High School, Highland Middle School, Highland Primary, Highland Elementary, St. Paul School, and Alhambra Primary & Grantfork Elementary were invited to nominate one educator who demonstrates outstanding service, dedication, and impact.

This year’s outstanding nominees included:

- **Sara Wilkinson**, Highland Primary School – 15 years of service
- **Kendall Detweiler**, Highland Elementary School – 5 years of service
- **Carrie Warnecke**, Grantfork Elementary – 19 years of service
- **Dawn Hubbard**, Highland Middle School – 25+ years of service
- **Jodi Ramsey**, Highland High School – Over 30 years of service
- **Elizabeth “Liz” Grotefendt**, Alhambra Primary School – 24 years of service

Each of these educators has made a lasting impression on their schools and communities, and the Rotary Club commends them for their tireless efforts.

About Elizabeth "Liz" Grotefendt

Born and raised in Alhambra, Liz Grotefendt has spent her entire 24-year career in education giving back to the very community that helped shape her. As a Kindergarten teacher, Liz meets each child with patience, compassion, and individualized care — helping them grow both academically and personally.

Beyond the classroom, she leads Alhambra Primary’s **Mini Marathon** each year — a months-long program combining fitness, academics, and community service. Students run a cumulative 13.1 miles while collecting donations for Leaps of Love, organizing a food drive for HACSM, and participating in a school-wide book swap to promote reading access for all.

The program culminates in **Marathon Day**, a joyful celebration where the final mile is completed in front of cheering families, classmates, and community members. Liz’s passion and leadership make this more than just an event — it’s a source of inspiration and pride for the entire Alhambra community.

As Principal Kronk stated in his nomination:

“Mrs. Grotefendt truly puts the needs of others before herself. She builds bridges between families, students, and the community — and her focus on service is part of her daily teaching practice.”

Liz is also known as the colleague who always steps up, lends a helping hand, and brings people together with understanding and kindness. Her selflessness and deep-rooted dedication to service make her the embodiment of Rotary values.

The Highland Rotary Club, in partnership with the **Highland Chamber of Commerce**, was honored to present Mrs. Grotefendt with a commemorative plaque and a gift basket prepared by the Chamber in recognition of her extraordinary work.

“We are proud to launch this annual award to honor educators who exemplify service, compassion, and commitment,” said a representative from the Highland Rotary Club. “Liz Grotefendt’s impact on students and her community is a shining example of what this award stands for.”