

2015 Phoebe Apperson Hearst Outstanding Family-School Partnership Award Recipient – Key Biscayne Community PTA, Key Biscayne, FL

Key Biscayne Community School (KBCS) PTA serves a K-8 culturally diverse and socio-economic school community, with more than 80% of households speaking Spanish as a first language at home. The PTA spent the school year focused on the shared goal of ensuring their students' health and safety by promoting healthy lifestyles at school and at home with a concentration on mind and body. Together with the school, they formed a cafeteria committee to engage families in understanding wellness. The committee hosted a "Healthy Eating Week" in partnership with a chef through an interactive cafeteria presentation. Families were educated on the importance of rainbow foods to include vegetables and fruits.

Throughout the year, the committee provided recipes and tips to families on incorporating fruits and vegetables into the students' diets. With over 60% of children whom walk, bike or skate to and from school daily, the PTA partnered with the Village of Key Biscayne and an urban planning company to develop and participate in *Safe Routes to School*. The PTA also collaborated with families and the local business community to make significant improvements to playgrounds through a focused fundraising effort with a specific goal of these school improvements.

The focus of healthy lifestyles did not stop here! In February, the PTA hosted a fun run for their elementary students and a color run for their middle schoolers. The PTA supported and promoted anti-bullying and internet safety presentations and informational workshops for families. Marketing for all events and presentations were shared in English and in Spanish.

The PTA devised a novel approach to welcoming and transitioning new families to the school, specifically for parents of young children and families relocating from other countries into their school. The new parent committee met with these parents and held orientations to welcome them to the school. The PTA also supported student success by working with the school around their improvement plan to purchase computers for the classrooms and cameras and equipment for the student-run morning news, KBCS Shark Attack. That's the power of strong family-school partnerships.

2015 Phoebe Apperson Hearst Family-School Partnership Award of Merit – Elkins Point Middle PTSA, Roswell, GA

Elkins Pointe Middle School PTA devoted their school year in partnership with their principal to improve family and community engagement and dispel the unfounded bad reputation of their school that had divided the school community for years. They quickly developed an action to bring parents and the school community together to

support student success based on their recommendations of their Family-School Partnership Scan.

Families were greeted with words of welcome in the 27 languages spoken at their school, as well as with flags from an array of countries hung proudly on the walls. The PTA supported WEBB, a peer mentoring program with 8th grade students welcoming incoming 6th graders to their school. An afterschool program—Star House—was also supported by the PTA to assist students with homework and help sessions before and after school that focused on specific state standards. The PTSA held several workshops for parents on how to support their child's learning around state standards at home.

Parents were encouraged to attend school board meetings, the local governance council to empower families to advocate for all children. Their voices were heard and Elkins Pointe exemplified sharing power in the rewrite of the school's 2014-2015 school compact that better serves the families of Elkins Pointe. This school worked diligently to pave their way on the road to excellence.