

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Nashville Public Education Foundation to Celebrate Inspiring Educators, Innovators, and Leaders at 2022 Public Schools Hall of Fame

*NPEF Introducing New Inspiring Leader Award  
Supported by Lipscomb University at Hall of Fame*

**NASHVILLE, TENN. – June 1, 2022** – The Nashville Public Education Foundation (NPEF) has announced its Inspiring Educator and Inspiring Innovation awards for its annual Public Schools Hall of Fame, as well as a new Inspiring Leader award in partnership with Lipscomb University. Each year, the Hall of Fame celebrates the alumni, educators, innovators, and leaders making a difference in the lives of Nashville’s students and community. Among the inspiring category honorees to be inducted into the Hall of Fame are McGavock High School teachers Angela Allen and Laura Vignon, Cora Howe School Principal K.C. Winfrey, and two organizations supporting our students, the Black Book Project and Urban Green Lab. The event, presented by [First Horizon Foundation](#), is scheduled for September 8, 2022, at the Music City Center and coincides with the foundation’s 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

“It’s an honor to support an event that continuously celebrates outstanding individuals who are deeply committed to uplifting Nashville’s students,” said **Carol Yochem, First Horizon Bank Middle Tennessee Region President**. “We are proud to stand alongside organizations like NPEF and our fellow Hall of Fame sponsors to celebrate the leaders working to improve our public schools.”

The Inspiring Leader Award, presented by Lipscomb University, is given to an educational leader in MNPS who demonstrates exemplary achievements in public education at the district or school level. The winner receives \$2,500 along with an additional \$7,500 for their school.

The inaugural Inspiring Leader Award will be given to K.C. Winfrey, Executive Principal of Cora Howe School. Winfrey has worked in public education for over two decades, starting his career as a special education teacher in 1999. After teaching in Kentucky and California, he transitioned to Tennessee where he worked as a special education teacher in MNPS for ten years at Cora Howe School, where he has now served as Executive Principal since 2012. Winfrey has led many district-level efforts in developing best practices in academic and behavioral delivery for those with the most severe exceptional needs, including serving on the MNPS Principal Advisory Group. He also serves on Faculty Advisory Board of the Special Education Department at Vanderbilt University to help develop the next generation of special education teachers.

“As we reflect on our accomplishments over the 20 years since NPEF’s founding, we are especially proud of the Nashvillians we’ve honored at the Hall of Fame. This year, we are excited to recognize another group of honorees working to ensure students can thrive in public schools,” said **Katie Cour, Nashville Public Education Foundation President and CEO**. “We’re thrilled to have Lipscomb University play a part in our celebration of the talent in our schools, joining the leading

organizations sponsoring Hall of Fame Awards, including Belmont University, Nissan, UBS, and Vanderbilt University.”

In addition to the new award, NPEF has announced its honorees for the 2022 Public Schools Hall of Fame Annette Eskind Inspiring Educator and Thomas J. Sherrard Inspiring Innovation and Inspiring Educator Awards.

The Annette Eskind Inspiring Educator Award, presented by UBS, honors two MNPS teachers who have demonstrated an incredible dedication to students through the unpredictable changes and challenges of the pandemic. Each Inspiring Educator receives \$2,500 along with an additional \$2,500 for their schools to support their work. The 2022 Inspiring Educators are:

- **Angela Allen**, a Cambridge AICE Psychology and AVID teacher at McGavock High School. Angela has worked in Metro Nashville Public Schools for 15 years. She has worked in numerous areas of special education serving as an Instructional Facilitator for the MNPS District special education department, instructor and case manager at a behavior school, and also led special education departments at three different schools within MNPS. Prior to her current role, Angela created a curriculum and course offering for high school juniors to prepare for college, and is the co-founder and CEO of CollegeLeaps, a startup geared towards providing equitable access to college for all students.
- **Laura Vignon**, the instructional coach for all content areas at McGavock High School. Laura serves over 120 teachers in MNPS. Prior to her role as an instructional coach, Laura gained 14 years in the classroom teaching standard, honors, and Advanced Placement courses in U.S. History, World History, Government, and Leadership. Laura serves on several leadership teams, including the school leadership team and the AVID Leadership team. She was the Social Studies Department head at her school for five years. At the district level, she currently serves on the AVID District Team and served as the MNPS Social Studies Council lead for two years. Laura is the co-founder and President of CollegeLeaps.

The Thomas J. Sherrard Inspiring Innovation Award, presented by Nissan, recognizes outstanding organizations making a difference for Nashville’s students. Each Inspiring Innovation honoree will be awarded a \$5,000 grant to further their mission. This year’s recipients are:

- [The Black Book Project](#), an effort to collect books featuring black characters for children who would otherwise not have access to books that represent them. Launched by Book’em board member and former teacher Meredith McKinney, the Black Book Project has collected thousands of books to distribute to schools, businesses, government institutions, religious organizations, and other community groups serving low-income youth in Davidson County.
- [Urban Green Lab](#), a nonprofit organization teaching communities about sustainable living. The organization’s Sustainable Classrooms division aims to show that sustainable living can be a part of any classroom, training educators to teach through a sustainability lens and allow students to connect to the larger world outside of their school’s walls through home investigations and project-based learning activities. The Students in Sustainability program

connects high school upper class students to local business green teams to learn how workplaces strive to become more sustainable.

NPEF [previously announced](#) it would honor the late **Kay Simmons**, the organization's founding executive director, with the Hall of Fame's highest honor, the Nelson C. Andrews Distinguished Service Award, presented by Vanderbilt University. The foundation also named this year's Distinguished Alumni Award recipients, presented by Belmont University: **Dr. André L. Churchwell**, a graduate of East High School (now East Nashville Magnet High School), the Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer for Vanderbilt University; **Diane Janbakhsh**, a graduate of John Overton High School, the founder and executive director of the Hispanic Family Foundation and owner of Plaza Mariachi; and **Dwayne Tucker**, a graduate of North High School, the CEO and founder of DT Consulting and CEO of LEAD Public Schools.

For 18 years, NPEF has honored Nashville individuals and organizations committed to supporting the city's public schools and students during the annual Public Schools Hall of Fame. This year's event is co-chaired by **Lisa Ferrelli**, a 2021 Hall of Fame Distinguished Alumni honoree and a Senior Vice President at Bank of America, and **Alfonzo Alexander**, the Chief Ethics and Diversity Officer of the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA), who serves on the NPEF board of directors.

All are welcome to join NPEF to celebrate the Public Schools Hall of Fame and its honorees. More information about this year's event can be found online at <https://nashvillepef.org/hall-of-fame/>.

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### **About the Nashville Public Education Foundation**

The Nashville Public Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization that works to remove the barriers to educational experiences by highlighting success, serving as a strategic thought partner to Metro Nashville Public Schools, convening stakeholders, and advocating for change so all students can thrive in school. Since its founding in 2002, NPEF has fostered data-driven solutions that have led to tangible results in professional learning for teachers, teacher pay, principal quality, college access and success, and more. To learn about NPEF's support of Metro Nashville Public Schools and its students, visit [nashvillepef.org](https://nashvillepef.org).

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