

## **INSPIRA Distinguished Service Awards 2015 – Award of Excellence in Team category**

**Addison Trail Interact Club sponsors Esther Delgado, Jorge de Leon and Marco Gasca  
Addison Trail Interact Club officers Deanna Rodriguez, Jessica Garay, Kiara Crespo,  
Edgar Flores and Mayra Sarabia**

At Addison Trail High School (part of DuPage High School District 88), nearly 60 percent of the students are Hispanic, and that same percent of students are low income.

While many school districts might be overwhelmed by the challenges presented by those demographics, District 88 staff members continue to embrace the district's diversity. The various cultures present in the district are valued and celebrated as a cornerstone of District 88. And nothing embodied that value more than when Addison Trail hosted an event called Kermes, which means "carnival" in Spanish.

That festival, which took place on Nov. 1, 2014, embraced the Latino culture and brought together members of the community for an evening of fun, food and family. The event featured authentic cuisine, live entertainment (including a disc jockey and dance performances by a group called Quetzalli) and children's activities such as face painting and making sugar skulls.

"It was incredible to see this event come to life," said Addison Trail Principal Adam Cibulka. "We had the Mayor of Addison, parents, students and community members filling the hallways of the school. They all came to support Addison Trail, and that exemplifies the true meaning of our school motto, 'Blazer Pride.'"

Cibulka added Kermes was an opportunity to invite District 88 stakeholders inside Addison Trail to showcase the school and to share the successes of students and staff. During Kermes, the school's cafeteria and commons area were transformed into a bright arena of cultural celebration – colorful decorations lined the walls, bold and vibrant patterns flashed through the air as dancers performed in traditional Flamenco outfits, and the smells of homemade Latino dishes filled the room.

Addison Trail Interact Club sponsors Esther Delgado, Jorge de Leon and Marco Gasca coordinated Kermes, which was attended by more than 400 people. The team worked with Interact Club students to promote the event, coordinate entertainment, solicit volunteers to help run the festival and ask local businesses for auction items and food donations. In all, nearly 20 companies contributed to Kermes.

"The students took charge and were pivotal in making this event a reality," Delgado said. "They developed life skills through going door to door in the community, creating publicity materials and planning all the details to ensure everything ran smoothly."

The Interact Club officers are seniors Deanna Rodriguez, Jessica Garay, Kiara Crespo, Edgar Flores and Mayra Sarabia. Kermes raised nearly \$4,000 that will go toward scholarships for students who are Interact Club members. Proceeds also will benefit District 88 students who will participate in a trip to Spain this spring.

To thank the businesses that helped with Kermes, District 88 invited them to a Board of Education meeting on Nov. 17, 2014, where they were publically recognized for their contributions.

"We know our success at District 88 comes from our partnerships and relationships with our community members," said District 88 Superintendent Dr. Scott Helton. "Kermes epitomized those bonds and how we will accomplish our mission of working for the continuous improvement of student achievement through working together as a community."