

## HUBBARD LIFE-CHANGING TEACHER AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

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(Left to right) Tina Ahlgren, Deb Wolinsky, Rhonda Pierre, Cynthia Hartshorn

Four Indianapolis Public Schools teachers were named the first recipients of the Hubbard Life-Changing Teacher Award, and each received a \$25,000 prize.

Recipients include: Tina Ahlgren, a math teacher at Shortridge Magnet High School for Law and Public Policy; Cynthia Hartshorn, a choir and drama director at Arsenal Technical High School; Rhonda Pierre, a math teacher at Harshman Magnet Middle School; and, Deb Wolinsky, a math and resource teacher at Broad Ripple Magnet High School. Each was surprised with a check, a video tribute about their impact on students, and a red glass-etched apple commemorating the event.

“The stories of how devoted these four Life-Changing Teachers are to not only helping students achieve in the classroom, but also to their entire well-being, are beyond remarkable,” said Al Hubbard, who serves as Chairman of E&A Companies, an Indianapolis-based business. “Our entire community owes them immense gratitude for their sacrifices and their impact on shaping young people.”

Ann D. Murtlow, United Way’s president and CEO said, “United Way’s focus on education as the foundation for a better life has taught us that teachers are the single most important factor in a student’s success. So this opportunity to recognize four extraordinary educators and to inspire others to their high level of service is profoundly meaningful.”

The teachers were honored at a ceremony hosted by United Way and longtime education champions Al and Kathy Hubbard representing The Hubbard Family Foundation. The new program was launched in November at a news conference where the Hubbards announced they would invest up to \$400,000 to honor exceptional teachers each year for three years.

### AWARD RECIPIENTS

#### Tina Ahlgren

“Every day she makes me want more education. She is the reason I want to learn,” wrote a student who joined six others who nominated Tina Ahlgren as their life-changing teacher. Described as someone who uses engaging techniques, Ahlgren’s approach is also effective and measurable. Student scores in Ahlgren’s Algebra 1 classes helped Shortridge raise its grade from F to B.

“Whether she is dressing up with goggles and ski poles to explain a slope or going to the store to buy a new shirt for a student, she is always thinking of her kids,” wrote a colleague.

Two students told poignant stories of how Ahlgren went above and beyond to change their lives. A young woman relayed that she had to stop going to school in her sophomore year when she had her baby.

As her Algebra teacher, Ahlgren had worked with her after school to break down the class work “until I got it.” After the baby was born, Ahlgren visited the new mother and child in the hospital, become a godmother, and has since helped her student get back in school. Today, she is approaching graduation while working full time.

A young man recalled times when he “came to school and acted a fool...but Ms. Ahlgren never gave up on me.” Ahlgren gave him lunch money and paid his cell phone bill when he could not, and even helped him make up weeks of missing assignments when he was in juvenile detention.

Later, when her student got accepted to college, Ms. Ahlgren drove him to Vincennes University, joined him in meetings with administrators, and paid his room and board down payment. Without Ahlgren’s support, “I would never have graduated from high school,” wrote the student.