



## ...We Care School Pathfinder Awards...

Recognizing & celebrating how WE see & create our Culture of Caring

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We become what we focus on and think about. Creating and prioritizing a school culture of caring as the foundation for learning and community is a journey, not a destination. There are no linear one size fits all paths to follow, nor is there a curriculum. We all possess a capacity to care. It is a gift of spirit we share. We Care Schools helps intentionally shift our collective focus to see what we have blindly taken for granted: the many acts of caring committed every day. We are connecting and unleashing a creative force: the power of caring together. New rituals are created to grow the school culture of caring. Committing a caring act, seeing a caring act, describing a caring act, hearing about a caring act, and reading about a caring act all produce brain chemicals that enhance our well-being, learning and creativity. A school culture of caring is created by the dynamically unique set of relationships within a school community (teachers, students, parents, staff, and school partners). Small steps of discovery and action form a pathway. These pathfinding initiatives cumulatively and progressively grow our relational capacities, individually and collectively. As a network of caring and trust grow over time our opportunities grow exponentially. There is no end to this path of growing the wholeness of community through our positive relationships. It is ever-renewing. We are growing a culture of seeing and co-creating abundance through our positive relationships. As We Care Schools developed at University Elementary in Shreveport the stories of growing the culture inspired recognizing individuals as Pathfinders, the Pathfinder Award emerged.

### ...Pathfinders...

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Celebrating the journey is an important ritual in prioritizing a culture of caring as the soil from which we grow and the foundation upon which we build. **Pathfinder Awards** are a way to recognize members of the school community that, through their actions, are helping us understand emerging patterns defining the unique school culture of caring. A **Pathfinder** is an individual or collective (2 or more) that consistently demonstrates the power of caring together in beautifully simple and complex ways. How is our culture growing wholeness? What new capacities have we gained? Pathfinders are guiding us as a learning-doing community co-creating our shared future. Pathfinders are relational leaders forming a relational leadership network for our school and city.

### ... Identifying Pathfinders...

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Deciding who will receive a Pathfinder Award is an act of observation and discernment. We are interested in learning more from each We Care School about methods they use to Identify Pathfinders. Decisions could be made by a principal or a core leadership team. Engaging the school community in assisting with identifying Pathfinders could be another way of growing the skill of seeing good in others. Why someone merits Pathfinder Award recognition is a story to be told in the language of the award. To date approximately 50 Pathfinder Awards have been presented to school community members at University Elementary (WCS pilot in Caddo Parish) and Homer Elementary (Claiborne Parish). These examples are available from CR Institute.

## ...Preparing the Pathfinder Award...

Community Renewal prepares the Pathfinder Awards for each We Care School (See photo example below).

The following are steps for preparing awards:

1. School Identify recipients for a Pathfinder Award and describe the story: pathfinder initiative, pattern of behavior growing understanding of the school culture of caring, a story of transformation or...
2. School transmits a list of recipients to CR Institute (Kim and Dianne). The name of the recipient, student or staff (position: teacher, para, support, administrative...), grade level, house assignment for the school year, and a brief description of why they are being recognized as a Pathfinder.
3. CR Institute drafts language customized for each Pathfinder Award based upon information provided by the We Care School. Drafts are sent to the principal or point-of contact for review.
4. School review and editing of draft awards. School approval of accepted draft.
5. School to provide CR Institute digital files (png, gif or jpeg) of school logo and house logos for use in customizing the Pathfinder Award Certificate.
6. CR Institute preparation of the Pathfinder Awards as shown below. The school may elect to frame the award to elevate its significance. Awards may be picked up from CRI.



## ...Presenting Pathfinder Awards...

We suggest that Pathfinder Awards be presented in a manner of celebration by the school community. Use your creativity to share the story about the award in a manner that surprises recipients. Have fun engaging everyone in celebrating Pathfinders as relational leaders as guides in growing capacities and understanding of our culture of caring and the powers of caring together.