

Jay Roscup

Thank You For Being **Our** Friend



Community Schools Director for the Wayne County Consortium Jay Roscup's work benefits many _ thousands actually. Those who know him best say without hesitation he quietly works behind the scenes and is truly an unsung hero who makes life better for others.

On September 3rd he received the 2019 Newark Central School District "Friend of Education" award, given annually to an individual, organization or business that goes the extra mile to support Newark education.

But it isn't just the NCSDD who has been the benefactor of his endeavors.

Roscup, who also previously worked as the Consortium's Grant Administrator, has written and obtained in excess of \$40 million in grants for Wayne County schools and agencies during the last five years alone.

Programs like Universal Pre-Kindergarten, after school

programs, mental health supports and training, social emotional learning supports, curriculum development, art enrichment, services for homeless youth and many more wouldn't exist in many funding-strapped rural Wayne County schools without Roscup's grant-writing and winning.

Before presenting him with the award at the early morning assembly in the Newark High School auditorium for NCSDD staff September 3rd, Superintendent Matt Cook said Roscup's extraordinary successes in obtaining grant aid for various programs in Wayne County schools have resulted in employment for many in the room.

"I am pleased and proud to give the award to an individual who does a lot of behind the scenes work that has brought in millions of dollars in education-related grants to the Wayne County region. Jay is one of those guys that cares more deeply about this community _ Wayne County _ than anybody I know . . . and always in the best interest of kids," he said.

Roscup graciously accepted the recognition, but quickly moved to credit others, whom he characterized as unsung heroes, for his successes.

One was Rebecca Gamba, who is the retired former grant writer for the Wayne County Consortium whom he affectionately calls his “grantmother.”

“I worked with Rebecca at Lyons and any ability I have at grant writing only found success because she took time to mentor me. Rebecca’s belief in me and her willingness to listen to unorthodox ideas built my confidence,” Roscup said. “Her determined drive to find resources and promote good showed me that we do not need to accept things as they are. Ideas matter. Effort matters. We can make change. Rebecca won millions of dollars in grants. Thousands of children have had summer and after school programs; hundreds have benefitted from counseling; and still hundreds more have had a chance to attend UPK because of her work. And I credit anything I have won to her ability to draw out talent from me.

“Rebecca took me in as a young administrator and transformed my career. I’m so profoundly thankful for the privilege of knowing her,” he continued. “I’m glad I can still call Rebecca and ask for her guidance. I wish more people knew how impactful, wonderful and deeply good she is as a person who preferred to contribute quietly.”

“The other woman I always have to credit is my grandmother Betty Sizemore who passed away 10 years ago this month.

I do not go a day without thinking of her and she taught me almost all I know about faith, hope and love. She and my grandfather lived in Florida. After one flight down to visit, I remember travelling to their house from the airport. We stopped for lunch and my grandmother saw a young man with developmental disabilities and his family. She immediately went over and gave him a hug and chatted with the whole group. In the grocery store a little later, she saw a young woman she knew from school. And again _ a hug, a smile, a story and a listening ear. Those folks were so glad to see her. She was delighted to have found them on her way home with me.

“As I have continued on in this profession _ I have cherished that trip from the airport because it reminds me of the deep value of relationships that form even in the most common of interactions and how important it is to be kind. As I started to work with at-risk youth, I remembered her kindness and her consistency. I remembered how she made people feel and how I felt around her. She was steady when I was not. She was available. She was kind. We all need those North Star souls in our lives. And for young people, I want to be for them what she was for me.

“Last week, a former student of mine who is now 30 years old now sent me a video about someone that believed in a young person and gave them a second chance. He said ‘Mr. Roscup, I saw this and I thought of you.’ That meant a lot to me. Perhaps I have been able to give back enough of the goodness I’ve been given to make a difference.

“That message from my student reminded me of the core message I want to share with you today. There is no job here that is small. Every job is important _ custodian, bus driver, grant writer, lunch lady, teacher, coach, courier _ we are all here to call out and draw forth the best of humanity. I would encourage you to allow these young people that will arrive here at school this week in desperate need of you to believe in them. To hope for them. To loan to them your calm, your competence and your kindness as they develop their own. Allow these young people to call out the best in you. And take time to be inspired and in awe of the people around you who do such important work.

*“**Everything** we do is important. Every reaffirming nod, every corrective glance, every safe arrival, every warm meal, every high five and handshake . . . I went through a time as a teacher where I lost faith in that truth. I was wrong. A trauma researcher said once to a small group I was studying with _ ‘There is no research that says all hope is lost.’ Everything we do is important, because everything we do holds out hope. May you have the strength to hold out hope to every student, every day. Thank you for letting me be with you today and tell you about the investment so many good people made in me. I look forward to hearing about the good you will do.”*

