



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

School Specialty Announces Winners of the 2024 Crystal Apple Awards Celebrating Inspirational Teachers

The winners of the annual contest receive a personalized trophy, a \$500 gift certificate to spend at School Specialty, and a \$250 gift certificate for their school

(GREENVILLE, Wis.) April 30, 2024 – [School Specialty](https://www.schoolspecialty.com), a leading provider of learning environments and supplies to the pre-K–12 education market, today announced the 2024 winners of its annual Crystal Apple Awards, which celebrate teachers who embody inspiration, leadership, and passion in teaching.

Each year, students, parents, administrators, fellow teachers, family, and friends nominate teachers who go above and beyond to touch the lives of students every day. School Specialty selects 10 finalists from the nominees, and three winners are then selected by public vote. School Specialty received a record 611 nominations this year, nearly doubling last year’s total. This year’s winners will each receive a personalized trophy and a \$500 gift certificate from School Specialty for themselves, as well as a \$250 School Specialty gift certificate for their school. They are:

- Typhani Russo, from Commonwealth Charter Academy in Harrisburg, PA, is the founder of Bookworms Against Bullies, a nonprofit that inspires students with stories of overcoming bullying;
- Mercedes Salas from Uvalde Elementary School in Uvalde, TX, whose constant love, kindness, and support has impacted so many students; and
- Julie Pfeifer from Abraxas School of Ohio in Mansfield, OH, who has launched a book club, an auto body club, and a 3D printing club as she sought to engage students using their own interests, and written curricula for new courses, allowing students to earn certificates they can use after graduation.

To read the full stories of this year’s winners, visit [SchoolSpecialty.com](https://www.schoolspecialty.com).

“Having witnessed firsthand the immense efforts and lifelong impact educators have on students, I am profoundly honored to be part of the Crystal Apple Awards,” said Sue Ann Highland, PhD, the national education strategist at School Specialty. “Teachers serve as the cornerstone of our education system, wholeheartedly devoting themselves to crafting enriching experiences and safe

havens for our students. Recognizing their dedication and exceptional contributions is extremely important, and one of the most rewarding aspects of my role at School Specialty.”

Finalists for the Crystal Apple Awards receive a \$100 School Specialty merchandise certificate for themselves and an additional \$100 certificate for their school. This year’s finalists are:

- Lisa Longino from Mayfair Elementary in South Euclid, OH;
- Claudette Henson from Creative Environment Day School in Fayetteville, NY;
- Debra Cline from Manatee School For the Arts in Palmetto, FL;
- Holli Herndon from Pleasant Grove Elementary in Inverness, FL;
- Meghan Bodie from Edison Elementary School in Milan, OH;
- Kaylie Morgan from Uwharrie Charter Academy in Star, NC; and
- Michelle Morgan from Nichols Elementary in Huntington, WV.

To learn more about the Crystal Apple Awards, please visit SchoolSpecialty.com.

About School Specialty, LLC

With a 60-year legacy, School Specialty is a leading provider of comprehensive learning environment solutions for the pre-K–12 education marketplace in the U.S. and Canada. This includes essential classroom supplies, furniture and design services, educational technology, sensory spaces featuring Snoezelen®, science curriculum, learning resources, professional development, and more. School Specialty believes every student can flourish in an environment where they are engaged and inspired to learn and grow. In support of this vision to transform more than classrooms, the company applies its unmatched team of subject-matter experts and designs, manufactures, and distributes a broad assortment of name-brand and proprietary products. For more information, go to SchoolSpecialty.com.

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