



## Outstanding Teacher Award Don Heinz

Crooked Tree High School/Lakeview Academy High  
School/New Horizons

Charlevoix Emmet ISD  
Charlevoix, Michigan

I know I am preaching to the choir when I say teachers do not enter the field of education for the money. People who choose to work in education, especially alternative education, are passionate about making a difference. In the case of alternatives, they are dedicated to reaching students that others have given up on. Often the students themselves have this same opinion. It requires unique skills to reach and invest students in finishing high school, or their GED. Starting his career at STARR-Commonwealth, Don Heinz has worn numerous “hats” through the years. For the last twenty years, he has worked tirelessly at reaching students in the Char-Em ISD District which serves most of the northern Michigan school districts and includes at least three alternative education programs.

It was obvious from colleague Kristine Holmes’ nomination as well as the letters of support received from Alternative Education Supervisor Todd Derenzy, Program Manager Lynette Little, and Social Worker Angela Clancy that all those that come into contact with Don admire his dedication to the students. “He has facilitated the learning, development and graduation of around 168 students that most likely would not have completed high school,” states teacher/tutor Kristine Holmes. Mr. Heinz is described as “the model for exemplary teaching, not just at the academic level, but also by providing quality experiences designed to maximize student potential and prepare them for the real world.”

Don makes a difference because he believes in his students. One such student excitedly told Program Manager Lynette Little, “she had never gotten a “B” (as opposed to a C, D, or F) in any

subject, ever, and until Mr. Heinz, she had never had anyone believe she could!” Don Heinz gives to his students, his colleagues, his administration and community, and all are better for it.

**CONGRATULATIONS Don!**