



Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
Golden Apple Award | July 9, 2018

Mrs. Tracy Silta

“Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Nurse Tracy Silta demonstrates on a daily basis all of the personal and professional qualities of an efficacious school nurse for students,” wrote nominator James Knoebel, Special Education Department Chair, Soldotna High School. “She embodies what a school nurse and role model should be.”

Since 2002, Nurse Tracy Silta has been optimizing students’ health. She is in a critical role that makes certain Soldotna High School students are safe, healthy, and ready to learn. Her open door policy and the judgement-free space she creates exemplifies her commitment to students. Tracy makes her office a place where any student or staff member can go to for words of encouragement, a shoulder to cry on, an ear to listen, or even a cup of tea.

Passionate about her job, every day she strives to be the best school nurse within Alaska. Mr. Knobel explains, “Her commitment to her job shows through what she does on a daily basis with students along with the additional responsibilities she takes on outside of the daily nursing duties. She has led first aid trainings for several years, creating a collaborative environment in which staff members obtain the tools needed to be competent and prepared first responders. Our readiness to be able to act appropriately in emergencies is a true credit to Tracy’s teaching style and innovative approach to this training. Even with a large group of adults, she finds ways to allow us to connect with the material, while also providing us time to feel comfortable activating emergency protocols and providing care in various scenarios.”

Two years ago, she spearheaded the creation of yoga FOL time. Noticing that Soldotna High School had a need for enrichment opportunities during the last 30 minutes of the school day, Tracy was able to respond to this need by coordinating with Lisa Wells, a support staff and certified yoga instructor, and James Knobel to run a yoga group four days a week. This FOL provided students with a perfect way to find relief from their stressful day, reduce anxiety, increase flexibility, boost their emotional health, and promote personal vitality.

Soldotna High School houses the largest secondary Intensive Needs Special Education department in the district, and the success in meeting all of the students’ medical needs is in good hands with Nurse Tracy. Her compassion comes through in every interaction she has with students. Preserving student dignity is at the forefront of everything Tracy does for our medically fragile population. She is one of the strongest advocates these students have within the school. “I have been fortunate to collaborate with her on various medical protocols, and the knowledge she imparts in these plans allows parents to feel comfortable and assured that at Soldotna High School their child has access to a responsive nurse and a prepared support team,” said Mr. Knobel. “The appreciation parents have for these detailed plans is frequently communicated to the Individual Education Program (IEP) team and case managers.”

Over the last three years, during her own time, Tracy has been a member of a small group that run Cinderella’s Closet. This program provides all students within the district a chance to find a dress that will allow them to experience the magic of a memorable homecoming or prom. Through Cinderella’s Closet, Nurse Tracy’s scope of contribution has been seen as north as Nikiski to as far south as Homer. Megan Murphy, a counselor at Soldotna High said, “Tracy is able to make every student that is seeking out a dress feel beautiful, special, and important. As they seek out that dress, Tracy always makes sure they leave with a smile on their face.”

The connections Nurse Silta creates are often the catalyst that lead to students being able to overcome the obstacles to obtain a diploma that often feels unattainable. Her responsiveness, innovation, and scope of contribution is commendable. Principal Tony Graham said, “I made Tracy part of our intervention team. She has keen insight and acute awareness of what students go through. The bottom line is that kids know how much she cares by her actions. They want more of what she is giving: love.”

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education is proud to recognize Mrs. Tracy Silta for her dedication to the students of the school district, past, present, and future.