

Sarasota Teacher is Special Education Teacher of the Year

Arlington, Va., Feb. 23, 2015 – Helen Pastore, a teacher of students with disabilities at **Oak Park School**, has been selected to receive the **2015 Clarissa Hug Teacher of the Year Award** from **The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**, the world’s largest special education membership organization.

The **Clarissa Hug Teacher of the Year Award** recognizes an outstanding teacher of children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. The award honors a CEC member whose work reflects significant educational success for students, continued professional development, and the highest standard of educational quality.

Pastore, who was named the 2013 Florida CEC Teacher of the Year has taught students with multiple exceptionalities who are aged 14 to 22 years at Oak Park School since 2005. She is a lifelong learner with a Master’s degree in autism spectrum disorders and severe intellectual disabilities.

Pastore’s students benefit from her multifaceted approach. She strives to create a caring, safe and effective learning environment by blending multisensory methods, real-life learning experiences, and her belief that each year, every child can improve. Her highly individualized teaching method prompts parents and colleagues alike to vouch for her ability to bring out the best in each of her students.

A true educational advocate, Pastore currently represents her school district in a Common Core Community of Practice and has also coauthored and received a grant to establish a campus-based work center called the “we-Work Lab” that has benefited hundreds of students over the last three years.

Pastore will be recognized during the CEC 2015 Convention & Expo’s Opening General Session, the largest annual gathering of members of the field of special education, April 8, at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego. For more information, visit www.cecconvention.org.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is a professional association of educators dedicated to advancing the success of children with exceptionalities. We accomplish our mission through advocacy, standards, and professional development. Visit us at www.cec.sped.org.

