

Local Schools



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Chartwells Receives National Recognition

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Poplar Bluff's school dining service has received national recognition within its corporation for forging numerous partnerships and giving back to the community.

Chartwells Food Services Director Dixie Harden received the 2018 national 'Be-A-Star' Compass in the Community award out of over 600 nominations on Wednesday, Oct. 10, in Orlando, Fla. Poplar Bluff was among six districts that were honored in different categories out of 4,000 schools total under the Compass Group.

"I do it because I enjoy doing it," stated Harden, who has led the district's dining service since 2016. She added, half-serious: "It's not for the recognition; they can mail me the award."

According to a press release from the company, Chartwells was selected for partnering with 18 community organizations, including leading the Mule Packs program, sponsoring the Missouri Foster Adoption dinner and participating in Relay for Life to benefit the American Cancer Society, among other fundraisers.

Harden began her career with Chartwells 23 years ago at the former Kinyon Elementary just several years into what would become a longstanding partnership with the food service provider. She bounced around the district for a few years before accepting a director position in De Soto, only to later return home.

She has a soft spot for children in need, Harden explained. “I think that’s the big thing: You have to enjoy your job – enjoy what you do, because it takes some of your own personal time. Like everyone else, I like my weekends too.”

Chartwells employs about 60 people to operate the breakfast and lunch program at Poplar Bluff Schools. The food service vendor will host its annual free Community Thanksgiving in partnership with the Student Council from 5-7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 13, at PBHS.

Pictured: Dixie Harden (far right) is recognized nationally among other top executives within the Chartwells K12 organization at Universal Studios.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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