

2020—2021 Distinguished Service Award Recipient

This year's Distinguished Service Award goes to the GO Vote Committee:

Several years ago, the school district took on the idea of replacing our long-serving middle school. Although, it was generally accepted that the building needed to be replaced, it was clear early on in the process that this new school would be a very difficult project to get approved. There were no funds available from the state to assist school districts with new school construction, meaning the taxpayers would have to bear the full cost of this project.

In order to put in the best effort to bring this plan to fruition, Board Chairman Tom Newkirk had the foresight to build a group that could get the word out about the new school more efficiently than the district could. He assembled a wide swath of people from the district who represented all walks of life. Each person reflected a demographic from the district. Everyone had a different connection to the district. Some had children in the district. Some had no children in the district. Some were former board members. Some were retired teachers. We had young parents and older parents. All of them were avid supporters of education and the Oyster River School District.

This group met weekly for 6 months to strategize, delegate, and design a plan to get the word out to every taxpayer so they were fully educated by the time they had the ability to vote on March 10th. This effort included posting yard signs, writing Op-Ed's, scheduling house parties, hosting information sessions, visiting group homes, knocking on doors and just talking to people in their normal walk of life.

This long, arduous process was culminated on Election Day, March 10th, 2020. All the time, hard work, and determination were rewarded when the taxpayers approved the middle school project with an approval vote of 76%. The goal was to get the minimum of 60% support, and it was far exceeded. Never, in the history of this district has there been a project this large approved in the district, nor has it ever been approved on the first attempt. Both of these facts are unheard of when it comes to large school projects. The Go Vote ORMS Committee is one of the main reasons that the taxpayers were informed enough to agree that this project would enhance the level and quality of education in this district. Their tireless work will be marked forever with the presence of the most technologically advanced and sustainable building in the state of NH. Every time someone enters the new Oyster River Middle School, or drives by, they will be seeing a building that was built with more than steel, brick, and mortar. It was built with heart, determination, and a love of high-quality education. This new middle school will serve students and educators for generations to come. Many of whom are not even born yet.

I am honored to present the Go Vote ORMS committee with the 2021 Distinguished Service Award.

Please stand and be acknowledged as I read your name:

Julie Reece	Martie Gooze	Debbie Harmon
Erik Ickes	Julie Kelley	Anita Mathur
Krista Butts	Kathy Collins	Robert Sullivan
John Parsons	Mark DeTurk	Thomas Newkirk
Katrin Kasper	Paul Gasowski	Denise Day
Fred Wolff	Mike Anderson	Brian Cisneros