

# Sample Application

## NEA ESP of the Year Award DATA SHEET

### DATA SHEET

- *One-page maximum*
- *12-point font*
- *Handwritten sheets NOT accepted*
- *Page numbering begins with this page, page 1*

### STATE, FEDERAL, OR DIRECT AFFILIATE INFORMATION

President: John Jones

Affiliate Name: Yellowstone State Education Association

Address: 1779 One Hundred Street

Jollyville, Yellowstone 33333

Telephone: 202-555-1212 Fax: 202-555-1213 Email: jj@aol.com

### NOMINEE INFORMATION

Nominee: Joy Thomas Social Security: 000-00-0000

Home Address: 1012 Pretty Drive

Jollyville, Yellowstone 33333

Telephone: 111-111-3333 Fax: 111-111-1114 E-mail: joy@aol.com

School/Worksite: Yellowstone Elementary District: Jones

Work Address: 254 Overview Drive

Jollyville, Yellowstone 33333

Telephone: 111-111-7621 Fax: 111-111-7622 E-mail: yellowstoneelementary@aol.com

Job Title: Paraeducator

Subject(s): Elementary Number of years NEA Member 5

### LOCAL AFFILIATE INFORMATION

President: Ed May

Affiliate Name: Jollyville Education Association

Address: 240 Education Support Professional Blvd.

Jollyville, Yellowstone 33333

Telephone: 111-444-4444 Fax: 111-444-4441 E-mail: emay@aol.com

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*SEA*  
(State letter head)

### NEA ESP Award Selection Committee Members:

1. Joy's current job assignment has her working (as bus driver, janitor) the [define work responsibilities].

She works with teachers to develop schedules for her work with the special assistance. Joy participated in child study team meetings and to the teachers, administrator, and parents of the students she assisted solutions to time and space limitations is to play alphabet tag during recess to reinforce the day's lesson. She also helped develop an innovative system to distribute morning meal tickets that helped ease the burden of the cafeteria staff.

In 2004 Joy was in the first class of paraeducators to complete the state-approved courses for certification of paraeducators. As a result of her exemplary work, she received a scholarship from the local community College to participate in their certification courses. Through these and other professional growth opportunities, Joy expanded her knowledge of brain-based learning and child development. This knowledge enabled her to address both the group and individual needs of her students, preparing them to be life-long learners and productive members of the community.

### NOMINATION LETTER

- *Addresses all 5 criteria (Paragraphs numbered)*
- *Five-page maximum*
- *Double-spaced*
- *12-point font*
- *1 in. margin all sides*
- *Must be on state affiliate letterhead*
- *Signed by state president*
- *Page numbering continues, Pages 2-6*

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2. Joy participates in many activities of the [political] Party including lobbying for education issues, attending caucuses and focus groups, serving on the Platform Committee at various levels and participating as a delegate or alternate at district and state conventions. She helps plan, organize, and carry out [her local] UniServ Council's annual legislative dinner and conference. She has been active in many environmental affairs programs and activities including a Statewide Town Hall meeting on the teacher shortage at the Capitol.

Joy was a member of the bargaining team that negotiated and implemented a revolutionary salary schedule for the paraeducators in her district. Under the new schedule, paraeducators receive increasingly higher salaries for each level of educational experience they complete. Joy has been invited to explain and introduce this new salary concept at many conferences such as the National Education Association ESP Conference, and the State Education Association ESP Conference. The new salary schedule and several of the [her local UniServ Council] paraeducators were featured in [the local newspaper].

Joy frequently provides training and support for newly forming ESP groups in other locals at their request. She also responded to NEA's request to assist with other state ESP groups. Joy has encouraged members of her extended family to become active in the Association. Using her knowledge and passion for employee rights Joy inspires education professionals to become members and to become actively involved in their associations.

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3. Joy serves on the committee that works with local civic leaders to administer, select, and honor the recipients of a local Educator of the Year award. One of the most touching stories from Joy's life involves her mentorship and care of young people in addition to the work she does with young parents.

Joy has impacted the lives of many children. She has been a Girl Scout leader, a Den Mother, and taught swimming lessons. She is her local UniServ Council's "Cat-in-the-Hat", donning the full costume and make-up to do readings and presentations at many local elementary schools, community libraries, and also participating in promotions of the NEA Read Across America campaign.

If named the awardee, Joy would like for the money to be given to the Paraeducators Foundation to assist them with obtaining their certificates and becoming highly qualified. Her state recognizes the certification as proof of being "Highly Qualified" as mandated in the reauthorized ESEA (or No Child Left Behind). Paraeducators working in Title I programs or Title I buildings are a strong and vital support system for this reading instruction.

4. Association and community goals are Joy's personal goals. She truly believes in employee rights and public education, and feels deeply that we are each responsible for our community and the people in our neighborhoods. She strives to be a positive role model for her students, their parents, and all whose lives she touches. She always refuses to accept limits in her personal or professional life. One of her goals was to be elected president of her UniServ Council, a position traditionally held by a teacher. She had been elected president of her UniServ unit, a position

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traditionally held by a teacher. She had to promote herself, her knowledge, her skills, and her professional worth as an ESP in order to win the votes of her teacher colleagues who made up the majority vote. In 2002 Joy became the first ESP in her state to serve as UniServ president. Joy was the first ESP person in her local to serve as the local president.

Joy advises new people entering the profession that membership in the Association must be a top priority. She stresses the importance of building many positive and cooperative relationships with other educators, the school district administrators, with the community, and with legislative leaders. She reminds them to learn as well as teach, to continue to take classes for professional growth, and to remember that they can also learn from the students they teach. She encourages those who are new, as well as those who are experienced, to be kind to themselves, to their colleagues and to their students. They represent the present as they shape the future.

**5.** Joy went to bat for the paraeducators in her local UniServ unit to get them included in building-level faculty meetings and in-service trainings. She got the District to provide time and salary for paraeducators to attend workshops and negotiated in-service credit into their contract so that participation in workshops actually increases their salary permanently. She worked hard to get paraeducator's certification recognized in the contract with additional salary and leadership opportunities. Joy's work helped permanently. Joy's work helped enhance the opportunities and recognition of paraeducators within the district.

Joy enhances the image of ESP's in the community by setting a positive example of civic involvement. Her local UniServ unit has a blue ribbon program during National Education

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Week, including ESP day, and Joy helps to distribute ribbons to our local on-air media personalities and contributes to their newscasts and new releases during this promotion. .

Thank you for considering Joy for this prestigious NEA award.

*John Jones*

John Jones

State Association President

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JOY THOMAS

RESUME'

## RESUME'

- *One-page maximum*
- *Double-spaced*
- *12-point font*
- *1 in. margin on all sides*
- *May be narrative, bulleted list, or both*
- *Page numbering continues, page 7*

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JOY THOMAS

### NOMINEE STATEMENT

To the Selection Committee:

I am truly honored to be considered for this recognition by the NEA 15 years ago in the .....School District. I was called a teacher's aide, and correcting papers, supervising seatwork, and monitoring lunch and playground job paid minimum wage and offered no benefits. Aides could not belong to We were a meet and confer group. Change did not come quickly or easily, persistently. After four years and with the assistance and help of the association elected president of my local.

The duties of associates in the classroom became more complex. I was more involved with the student's learning. I assisted with handwriting and had my own reading and math groups. Paraeducators faced new challenges with special education and regular education students being integrated. We were asked to administer procedures for medically fragile, severely and profoundly disabled students.

For eight years I worked with various education and community groups, used my contacts in the Democratic Party, and worked with the state association to secure statewide paraprofessional certification. I believe that certification provides tangible proof of our worthwhile work. Certification assists us in securing higher salaries, improves benefits, and contributes to increased respect and self-esteem for paraeducators. As a leader in this campaign, I was in the first group to complete the course work and be awarded certification. Following through on my belief, I chaired our local bargaining team when we achieved salary recognition

#### NOMINEE STATEMENT

- *Examples to illustrate all five criteria*
- *Two-page maximum*
- *Double-spaced*
- *12-point font*
- *1 in. margin all sides*
- *Affiliate responsible for editing or reformatting to follow guidelines*
- *Page numbering continues, pages 8-9*

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for state-certified paraeducators. One of my best friends has now been able to quit her second job because she is earning a livable wage! I'm very proud of this accomplishment.

I was instrumental in facilitating a governance merger between the teachers' and paraeducators' local organizations several years ago. This merger demonstrated how far we had come from the days when we had to go to the teachers group for permission to be affiliated.

Society and the needs of my community have also changed. My involvement has been to assist children with disabilities to enjoy their camping experiences, tutor young adults in literacy skills, and to raise funds for a child friendly history museum.

To survive and thrive in the face of numerous changes, I used the knowledge, training, and confidence I gained at the state and national conferences to guide me and keep me motivated. They provided me with resources, role models, and challenges. Being involved allowed me to develop as a leader and grow personally and professionally. The Association has become my extended family and provides me with many rich and rewarding friendships. Nothing in my life has allowed me to be so grounded and yet encouraged me so strongly to fly as high as I possible could. I would be honored to represent NEA as the 2004 ESP of the year.

I thank you for your consideration

*Joy Thomas*

Joy Thomas

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Dear Selection Committee,

I have had the pleasure of knowing Joy since the summer of 2015 and one-half years. I first met Joy when she was a student in a course for her first paraeducator to complete the course and demonstrated to her colleagues that she can be successful. She immediately established herself as a leader and demonstrated to others.

Despite her vast knowledge and experience as a paraeducator, she has continued to learn and demonstrated a strong desire to improve her skills and increase her knowledge. It is very apparent to me that she is tremendously dedicated to providing the best support to her students and their families as well as the highest quality of support to her supervising teacher and the entire educational team.

In addition to her dedication to her students and team, Joy has been a leader and advocate for paraeducators in her local association. Improved pay and recognition for paraeducators in her school district would not have become a reality had it not been for Joy's leadership. Respect for the paraeducator profession in this area has grown due to Joy's efforts.

Joy's positive impact on our community does not stop at the end of her work day. Over the years, she has volunteered as a tutor to assist others with their reading skills.

It is due to Joy's unselfish contributions to students with disabilities and their families, to the educational team at her school, to their paraeducator colleagues and the paraeducator profession, and to adult literacy learners that I highly recommend Joy for this honor. She is very deserving!

***Doug Jones***

Doug Jones, Director of Adult Education

### LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT #1

- *Maximum of three letters*
- *Two-page maximum for each letter*
- *Double-spaced*
- *12-point font*
- *1 in. margin on all sides*
- *Page numbering continues, page 10*

## Sample Application

Dear Section Committee,

It is my pleasure, personally and on behalf of the Education Association, to bring your consideration, Joy to be recognized as the 2004 NEA ESP award recipient.

There is no harder working member of the local than Joy. She serves on the Board, works with our Public Relations Committee, is a faculty representative, a recruiter, and a state and national delegate. We can always count on Joy.

Joy has been an active member of the Association for over 20 years, an organizing force behind our paraeducators when they formed a bargaining unit, and elected as local President numerous times and has served in every leadership role.

Her accomplishments are unimaginable. You will find her application information amazing and overwhelming. Joy is also a passionate crusader for public education and for kids. She serves on numerous District level committees and in multiple public forums and groups.

I want to talk about one of Joy most recent accomplishments; because I believe it is significant. The teachers and paraeducators in our city have initiated a problem-solving forum with the school district. This forum is called "Resolution Team." In Resolution Team, the top leaders of the Association sit down monthly with the top administrators of the district and share information in an attempt to solve problems. Problems can be contractual issues, but more often are non-contractual, day-to-day operational issues. Joy serves on Resolution Team on behalf of our paraeducators. She has earned the respect of the Superintendent and his cabinet by being forthright, honest and creative in helping to foster work site cooperation and excellence. She frequently mentors and provides resource assistance to employees who are experiencing difficulty on the job. Joy is caring and conscientious in carrying out her role as a problem-solver.

### **LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT**

**#2**

- *Maximum of three letters*
- *Two-page maximum for each letter*
- *Double-spaced*
- *12-point font*
- *1 in. margin on all sides*
- *Page numbering continues, pages 11-12*

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In our city every day is a beautiful day! We couldn't do without her and you will not find a better role model for other educational support professionals. I commend to you, Joy as your first, best choice for NEA 2004 ESP award.

Sincerely;

*Ed May*

Ed May, President

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Dear Section Committee,

It is an especially rewarding experience for a UniServ Director to meet and get to watch that person grow, develop, and achieve beyond our hopes or expectations. Joy's growth with Joy has provided me that rare and special opportunity. I hope that you will recognize that Joy is the most worthy candidate and bestow on her the recognition as the 2004 winner in 2004. I know no other person more deserving of this award.

Joy was on the interview team that selected me to be the UniServ Director. We have worked more and more closely together over the years and our respective passions have blossomed into a wonderful friendship.

Every single challenge I have put in front of Joy has been no obstacle. Joy has excelled on pushing her boundaries and achieving things that no one thought possible. In her achievements she is humble and always seeks to share the recognition with her teammates and colleagues. I have stopped thinking that Joy has gone as far as she is going to, because I never cease to be amazed at what she takes on next.

Joy's application and recommendations share so many of her personal and professional achievements that I thought I would take a little different direction, and share a lighter moment. Our city has an annual holiday parade in November. When Joy was chair of the public relations committee, the Association decided to place an entry in the parade. The committee thought it would be fun to have an oriental parade dragon. Undaunted by that suggestion, Joy organized a work group, took over the UniServ conference room and, using papier-mâché for the head and plastic table cloths with miles of duct tape for the body, they created a dragon. The dragon was fifty feet long and was carried on hula hoops by thirty volunteers. The children loved the dragon and watch for it every year! It has won lots of parade awards. One year, Joy heard a child

### **LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT #3**

- *Maximum of three letters*
- *Two-page maximum for each letter*
- *Double-spaced*
- *12-point font*
- *1 in. margin on all sides*
- *Page numbering continues, pages 13-14*

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comment that the dragon's feet didn't match. So the next year, all the dragon volunteers had matching feet made out of oven mitts and placemats. It's quite the sight to see!

Joy is an exceptional Educational Support Professional and I add my voice to those recommending her for this honor.

Sincerely,

*Tamara Jones*

Tamara Jones, UniServ Director