

# LA PLATA COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER OF THE YEAR

2024  
Nominees



# THANK YOU TO OUR HOST!

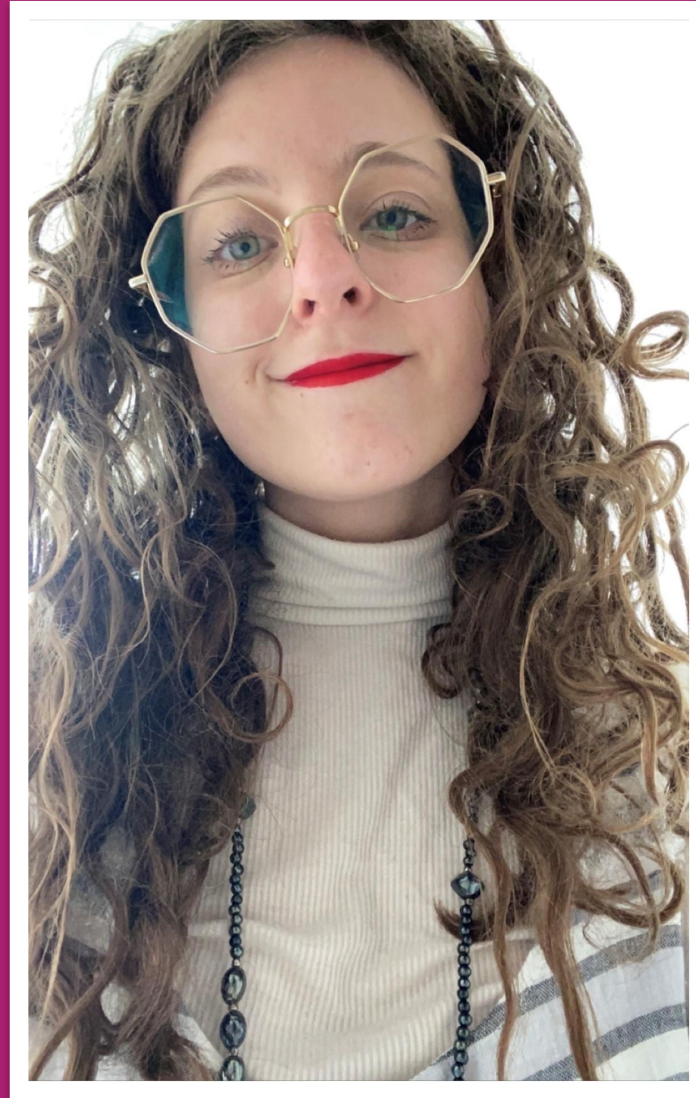
The logo for 'The Powerhouse' features the word 'POWERHOUSE' in a colorful, multi-hued font. The letter 'P' is purple, 'O' is teal, 'W' is orange, 'E' is red, 'R' is purple, 'H' is orange, 'O' is red, 'U' is purple, and 'S' is teal. The word 'THE' is written in white inside a teal circle, positioned between the 'P' and 'W'.

THE POWERHOUSE



# KATE CATHEY

Needham Preschool



“Miss Kate is a great preschool teacher. She is always excited and my daughter is always excited to go to school.”

# ARIEL ROGERS

Bayfield Early Education Programs



“She’s helped my child grow and I see how wonderful she is with the other kids, too. She is a gem.”

# ARUNA PIETRACK

Durango Montessori

"Aruna is working hard to show and share her passion for Montessori with her fellow teachers and the parents. She has a commitment to the students in her classroom with how she respects them on a personal level. Her love for Montessori shines through in all she does in and out of the classroom."



# BECCA TREFRY

Durango Early Learning Center



“Ms. Becca’s understanding and ability to work with her staff, students and parents is unparalleled.”

# THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 SPONSORS!



Mountain Sports  
CHIROPRACTIC

Urban Market  
-wares for the home-



# CHERI OVERSTREET

Needham Preschool



“Cheri goes beyond in her role and duties as an early learning teacher. The effort she makes changing stations in her class, keeping it fresh and interesting, is constant. Her compassion for children is unbelievable; how she makes them feel seen, heard, and allowed to be who they are is admirable.”



# BETH MCCLENDON

Riverview Preschool



“Ms. Beth cares and engages with kids professionally and kindly.”

# CALLIE RICKERMAN

Durango Early Learning Center



“Callie is simply the best teacher we could have asked for. She has taught our child the most critical skills of friendship, standing up for oneself, empathy and care. We are so grateful our child has been lucky enough to learn from Callie.”

# DASHA EGGLESTON

Summit Early Learning Center

“When you are in Miss Dasha’s toddler classroom you would believe that every one of the children are her own. She gives each child one on one attention filled with joy and love. She engages them in creative activities and projects and has excellent relationships with her families.”



# DENISE TULLEY

Florida Mesa Preschool



“We adore her; her approach to teaching with lots of hands-on activities. Our son is stoked to go to school each morning and sometimes doesn’t want to be picked up!”

# EMILY ADAMS

Durango Early Learning Center



“Emily has exceptional knowledge of early childhood development and shares that information with families in a caring and thoughtful manner. She is considerate and takes the time to discuss concerns and has reassuring words for new and old families alike.”

# DOLLY LEDVINA

Durango Early Learning Center

“Dolly has a deep understanding of children and child development. She treats each child as an individual, develops deep connections with them, creates fun and engaging activities, and develops relationships with parents as well.”



# GERRIAN CAMPBELL

Sunnyside Elementary Preschool



"Mrs. Campbell demonstrates exemplary knowledge and commitment to early childhood development. She engages not only with the students but the families as well. She makes sure to pass her knowledge on to the caregivers of her students. She has taught 5 of my children. She always treats each child with love and teaches me, as their mother, how to help them. We have open communication and she not only cares while she is teaching, but she cares all the time."

# HANNAH BAROVIER

Animas Valley Preschool



“With every interaction Miss Hannah beams positivity. She is always smiling, using thoughtful words to kids and parents alike. She has a diverse classroom and fosters inclusion for all. You can see that she lives and breathes early education in her mannerisms and always seems to be happy in the classroom.”



# HEATHER WALSH

Summit Early Learning Center



“Miss Heather is the most loving, welcoming teacher. She exhibits love and compassion for our children. No mountain is too high and no minor detail is too small.”

# HOLLY MALEAN

Durango High School Early Learning Center

"Holly shows so much attention and care to my children. She is empathetic to me as a mom, and so in tune with my children. She knows when something is expected and when it's unusual and is so helpful in such a kind and gentle way. She is there day in and day out working so hard for our children."



# KAMIE CONNER

Durango Early Learning Center

"Ms. Kamie shows up ready to teach each and every day. She is enthusiastic to see my child and embraces her strong personality with empathy and compassion. She is ready to facilitate a learning environment through creative play and arts and crafts. I appreciate knowing my child will be well taken care of in ways that she enjoys each day I drop her off for school."



# KARI CAVINESS

Bayfield Early Education Programs



“Kari is kind, compassionate, funny, always willing to try new things, implement new curriculum and has a positive attitude towards co-workers and students. The impact she makes on preschool aged children is obvious when children remember her years later.”

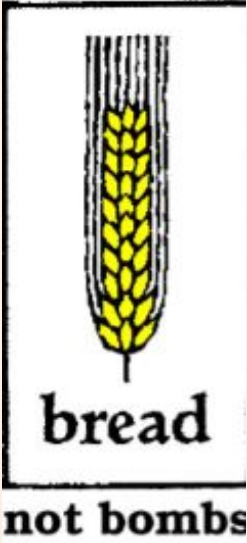
# KATHRYN ALTIERI

St. Columba Preschool



“Her incredible fostering of independence, learning, kindness and compassion in children is unparalleled!”

# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



Cap-to-Cap Carpentry Inc.

Jeff Dunn 970-759-6656  
Chris Devine 970-769-7063  
gaptogapcarpentry@gmail.com



# KATRINA DELEE WOJCIK

Durango Early Learning Center

“Miss Katrina is committed and compassionate and wants to make a difference in the lives of her students and their families.”



# KIM RABICK

Riverhouse Children's Center

"Kim has a big heart and loves each kid she takes care of! She shares her love with every individual she meets! She has a toolbox of tips and tricks that she shares with those who come in and are having a hard time with children. She's been at this for so long and has no problem being a team player."





# MADISON PALLANTE

Fort Lewis Mesa Preschool



“Ms. P loves her kids. Her compassion and love are unmatched. She goes above and beyond for them to create a loving environment for children to learn in.”

# MAKINA BERGTOLD

## Park Preschool



“Makina’s classroom is magical and highly curated. Each time she begins a new theme, the entire room is transformed with new experiences for her children. I don’t feel like we’re walking into a public school classroom but a children’s museum. Each interaction she has with parents and students is welcoming and low-stress. She exudes a quiet confidence that she and her students will have a good experience and can handle whatever the day may throw at them.”



# MELISSA KEMP

Animas Valley Preschool

“Miss Melissa is the best. She is great with student transition when needed, and always caring and helpful. Absolutely the best and sweetest para ever. We LOVE that we are able to have her in the class with our kiddo.”



# MELODY RAPER

Sonflower



“She works really hard and puts so many hours in to make sure her students are provided for. She’s caring, compassionate, and her students love her spunky personality.”

# K'LEIGH FARNSWORTH

Durango Early Learning Center

"Miss K'Leigh is an excellent, engaged, enthusiastic teacher of tiny humans. She is communicative and accessible, and works to help solve problems with us, which makes things feel very much like a team effort."



# CRYSTAL KNEPP

Sunnyside Preschool



“Miss Knepp always notices the small details and fosters engagement and learning with the kiddos. She has really helped my daughter with her letters, numbers, and having dedication and grit to persevere.”

# TIENNA BEGAY

Durango 9R Preschool Enrichment



“Miss Tienna’s attentive and creative presence creates an exciting atmosphere for the preschoolers. She is generous with her passion for early childhood learning, and we are grateful that our son has benefitted from her presence.”

# VIKKI MONTOYA

Park Preschool

“Miss Vikki contributes greatly to the peaceful nature of this classroom. A room full of 3-5 year olds is chaotic by nature, but Miss Vikki’s calm and caring energy is evident.”





# ANNA KEIL

Riverview Preschool

“Miss Anna is so genuine and kind. She is my go-to person to get the communication and situation smoothed out so my son’s days can be educational and meaningful.”



# BETSY DEMPSIE

Florida Mesa Preschool

“My son adores Ms. Betsy. When she is out sick, he requests her return. He feels safe enough to speak and explore in her classroom, which has not always been the case. You can tell she cares about her students.”



# REBEKAH EGGLESTON

Summit Early Learning Center

“She is a multitasking master. She knows how to manage every age group inside of the center, and never has a bad day (or if she is having one, we would never know it because she is so awesome!)”



# RENEE RODRIGUEZ

Durango Early Learning Center

"Renee is incredibly welcoming and nurturing to the toddlers at DELC. She always has a warm smile and the kids are drawn to her. She helps them bring out their own unique personalities and begin to thrive in the school setting."



# ROSE VALENCIA

Bayfield Early Education Programs



“Rose is an amazing educator who gives her all to her students! She strives to create relationships and connections with her students and their families. She is committed to her job and always brings her new ideas to the classroom.”

# SANDRA OTERO-CASTRO

Park Preschool

"She has so much patience, amazing communication skills, she exudes kindness and is a bright spot in my child's life."





# SARAH FLORES

Campbell Child and Family Center



“She has done so much to show her dedication to the program in various ways and is always willing to be helpful and flexible. She has found various ways to help her students learn concepts they are struggling with, as well as having compassion for their struggles and differences.”

# VANESSA FRANCO

Summit Early Learning Center

“Miss Vanessa has an abundance of compassion and patience with her children. She is calm and an excellent listener and is always ready with a kind and helpful response. Her commitment to her children is clear in both her gentleness and her effort in engaging them in creative activities and projects.”





# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

The Webb  
Family



CREAM BEAN BERRY  
*Artisan Ice Cream*



THE WOODHOUSE  
*day spa*®