

Dear Selection Committee,

It is my honor to nominate Serena Hawes for the Extra Mile Award. Serena is a Texas Native with a heart as big as Texas. Her welcoming presence is felt by everyone that comes into contact with her. Utah and Weber School District won the lottery when she moved here!

Serena started as a substitute teacher for Weber School District in 2015. She was every school's favorite substitute for two years until she accepted a position at Canyon View School as a paraprofessional in the Life program. During her time at Canyon View Serena assisted students in learning how to function in our community by helping them to learn how to use public transportation, cooking, interpersonal/communication skills and job skills for students which helped those students live their best lives.

In 2022, Weber Adult Education was fortunate when Serena applied for the assistant administrative assistant at Weber Adult Education. The moment Serena started in adult education she has set the tone and temperature of the office. Serena is a thermostat, not a thermometer! She is proactive and her influence is felt by setting the warm, friendly environment of our school. Serena makes everyone feel accepted and welcomed! She works hard every day to make sure everyone feels welcomed, seen and heard. Our school would be lost without her!

Serena started out as our assistant administrative assistant, but she has done much more than that job title encompasses and is now our bookkeeper. She has also taken on the responsibility for managing our GED IT program for all of our high schools in the district. The GED IT program was designed for students that were in danger of dropping out of school, many of whom felt they had little hope of having an on-time graduation. The grace and kindness that she has shown for these students and their families is unparalleled. Students from the GED IT program have even wanted to have their picture taken with Serena to post on social media because of the positive impact she has had on their lives. With Serena's help 72 high school students in the 24-25 school year received their GED.

Here are a couple of quotes from students about Serena when they graduated from our program. "I called to get information about the adult education while back-to-school shopping with my kids. We were shopping at the outlet malls in Park City, when Serena changed my life forever. She answered all my questions and told me she could get me into a registration appointment that afternoon. That made me nervous, but her warmth and kindness assured me that I could do this and she would be waiting for me. I showed up and she met me at the door. I stayed! I'm now a graduate and credit Serena for changing my life and my family's lives. Serena, God bless you!" Another student said, "Serena working that front desk. Girlfriend you are so sweet and always willing to help. You always told me hello when you had a chance as I walked into class. You also helped me understand why Abraham Lincoln said, "You can't trust everything you read on the internet." Ha, ha, get it? I know I do now, thanks to you!"

Each and every student feels a special connection to Serena! I know that there will be many amazing employees nominated for this award who have made a special impact in our schools; however, I feel that in adult education, our students have never been fortunate enough to have that kind of connection before in their educational journey. That is why this impact that Serena has had with our students in creating a sense of belonging and belief in themselves is so profound and significant. She is changing generations to come! In my opinion, Serena Hawes is the true embodiment of the Extra Mile Award!

Below is a recent GED IT graduate with Serena,
Thank you for your consideration.

Andrea Woodring

Principal, Weber Adult Education

