

Humble ISD's Carla Atkinson receives Walter Kase Teacher Excellence Award



Carla Atkinson joins fellow Region IV winners of the 2013 Walter Kase Teacher Excellence Award. From left: Carla Atkinson, Fayla Curry (Klein ISD), and Skyller Walkes (Alvin ISD).

Carla Atkinson, Service Learning Coordinator at Kingwood Park High School, was the recipient of the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) 2013 Walter Kase Teacher Excellence Award. Atkinson was one of three Region IV educators selected for this honor, which recognizes an outstanding effort to create an atmosphere in their schools that rejects prejudice and promotes respect for and understanding of diversity.

Atkinson and her students developed the theme of "Respect" at KPHS, which was recognized throughout the school year. It

began on the first day of school as an idea among a small group of students, and later evolved to include entire cohort years.

"We had each class make a poster designed like a puzzle piece about what respect meant to them," explained Atkinson. "Those pieces were brought to an assembly and put together for all to see. Later, the pieces were posted around the school as a reminder throughout the year to respect one another and exactly what that means."

Students also raised support and awareness with specially designed t-shirts, lessons for advisory classes and a "Be the Change Day," which encouraged students to explore the topic of respect through music, dance, guest speakers and small group discussions.

"We have continued the theme about understanding and accepting differences," said Atkinson. "We try to promote the idea of respect in everything we have done this year."

Atkinson also works with KPHS students all year long to explore service learning and engage them in community outreach. She strongly believes in fostering a spirit of respect on campus and in the community – an atmosphere she'll continue to build upon year after year.

"We hope to always continue the idea of respect at our school," she said. "Respect has everything to do with creating a safe learning environment for all. When students feel respected, they have more confidence to achieve their academic and personal goals."

Kingwood Park High School also received a certificate to *A World of Difference Institute* for 30 members of the faculty, staff, or student body at KPHS.

The Walter Kase Teacher Excellence Award was named for Holocaust survivor Walter Kase, who has dedicated his life to telling his story about life before, during and after the Holocaust.