

Louisiana Paraeducator Recognized with International Award

Arlington, Va., January [XX], 2026 – Louanna Sponge, a paraeducator in Lockport, Louisiana, received the 2026 Outstanding Paraeducator Award from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). This award is intended to honor CEC paraeducator members who are currently involved in direct or related services to students with disabilities and provide exemplary service to students and special educators.

Louanna works at Raceland Middle School, where she is known for her creative problem-solving skills, her unwavering advocacy for every student, and the support she extends to students and colleagues alike. Her focus on learner-centered classrooms has created a safe and encouraging environment, where all students can thrive.

Tyler Dufrene, M.Ed., a 6th grade math teacher who has worked with Louanna for over a decade expressed his appreciation for his colleague. “Louanna ensures that each student is met with compassion and the right level of challenge, refusing to let limitations define them. She consistently removes barriers to guarantee no child is left behind.”

Previously, Louanna worked in elementary school and high school settings, supporting students in achieving their Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and accessing accommodations and modifications. She also serves as the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (also known as PBIS) Mentor for her school.

“Louanna approaches each day with positivity, professionalism, and a genuine love for her job.,” said Jessica Chauvin, a special education teacher at Raceland Middle School. “Her commitment to continuous improvement, inclusiveness, integrity, and high ethical standards is evident in everything she does.”

Louanna will be recognized this March, along with other CEC Professional Award recipients at the CEC Convention & Expo in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest international professional organization dedicated to high-quality education that is inclusive and equitable for individuals with disabilities. Learn more about CEC at <https://exceptionalchildren.org/>.