

APPLICATION FORM

Nominee:

Name: _____

Title/Position: _____

School/Assignment: _____

Work Address: _____

Work Phone/Extension: _____

Email: _____

Nominator:

Name: _____

Title/Position: _____

Work Address: _____

Work Phone/Extension: _____

Email: _____

Completed nominations must include:

1. This application form or a copy as an attachment.
2. Three (3) nomination letters for the Josephine J. Decima Award for Excellence in the Field of Special Education. Letters should contain evidence and examples of award criteria listed in the brochure.

The nomination packet must include the completed Application Form with the following:

- Three (3) nomination letters written by individuals who are knowledgeable about the nominee's qualifications. These individuals may include professional colleagues, parents, students, community representatives, superintendents, administrators, supervisors.
 - ◆ Each of the three nomination letters must include evidence and examples of how others have benefitted from the nominee's service.
 - ◆ Each nomination letter must be on blank paper (no letterhead) at least 250 and no more than 1,000 words, typed single-spaced, using 12 pt. font with 1" margins. The nominee's name cannot be mentioned in any of the narratives.
- Nominees will be judged on the evidence of each of the attributes and qualities outlined in the Award Criteria herein listed.
- Nominations must be received **no later than Friday, Dec. 16, 2016 at 5 p.m.**
- Recipient will be notified by Dec. 31, 2016.
- This honor will include a \$500 award graciously donated by the Decima family.

Mail or email completed packets to:

Anne Burkley
Capital Area Intermediate Unit
55 Miller Street
Enola, PA 17025-1640
commcontractor@caiu.org

The Josephine J. Decima Award for Excellence in the Field of Special Education



“Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another.”

—G. K. Chesterson

Proudly presented by the Decima family in association with



The Capital Area Intermediate Unit does not discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, religion, race, color, age, and national origin in its education programs and activities or employment as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendment, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1955 as amended. Inquiries should be directed to the Coordinator for Title IX and Section 504, Capital Area Intermediate Unit, 55 Miller Street, Enola, PA 17025-1640.

About Josephine J. Decima

During her nearly 40 year career in teaching, **Josephine J. Decima**— or Josie as she was known by her family and friends — was a pioneer in the field of special education in central Pennsylvania. Josie’s dream was to become an elementary school teacher, a profession she pursued after majoring in Home Economics at Seton Hill University and becoming the first in her family to receive a college scholarship and degree. She later returned to college and was awarded a second degree in Special Education.

Josie found her true calling in the early 1960s when she began working with children with mental and physical challenges under a new program funded by Dauphin County Schools. It was here that she developed her great love for pupils with special needs who were not integrated into the main stream of public education. Josie was one of the leading proponents of inclusive education and was instrumental in having the first high school diploma awarded to a student with special needs. Many of her ideas for teaching came from her background as a home economics teacher, introducing meal planning, sewing, and the love of cooking to her students. Her belief that students with special needs were entitled to a strong academic program supplemented by life skills training provided her with the drive to fight for improved instructional programs and experiences for all children with physical and/or mental challenges.

“Mrs. Decima demonstrates excellent professional judgment. Her positive attitude affects in a positive way those who work around her.”

“Mrs. Decima’s experience has prepared her well for the supportive role. She has made valuable impressions on the lives of the physically handicapped children in the Capital Area Intermediate Unit.”

“Mrs. Decima is an all time favorite with the children and staff.”

— Quotes made by Josie’s Supervisor in her Final Performance Evaluation with the CAIU, May 14, 1982.

Josie taught at Melrose and Paxtonia Elementary schools in Dauphin County where administrators provided a classroom for her students. Josie’s hard work and commitment to her students enabled her to further develop her programs for students with special needs. Her leadership and innovation were instrumental in establishing the concept in Dauphin County that a well-rounded education for students with special needs must include strong school support along with specific external special education services.

By the early 1970s, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania established a system of Intermediate Units throughout the state to provide high quality services to students with physical, mental, and academic challenges. In 1972, Josie was hired by the Capital Area Intermediate Unit (CAIU) where she continued to implement innovative teaching strategies for students with special needs and became a lifelong advocate for these children. She continued to teach for several years at Paxtonia Elementary School and retired from a long and successful career in education in 1982 as a Master Itinerate Teacher for the CAIU.

Josephine Decima passed away in 2009 and will be remembered as a wonderful homemaker and wife of August R. Decima. She was the mother of four, beloved grandmother and great-grandmother, sister, and cherished friend. Her memory lives on in all who knew and loved her. Josie was a pioneer in the field of special education, a lifelong advocate for children with physical and mental challenges, and an inspirational role model for all teachers. The CAIU proudly established the Josephine J. Decima Award in 2010 to recognize and honor teachers who exemplify Josie’s outstanding work on behalf of students with special needs.

Award Criteria

The Josephine J. Decima Award is presented annually to a teacher who works within the CAIU service area and whose commitment and service in the field of special education epitomizes the qualities that Josephine Decima demonstrated in her work with children. These include:

- Advocacy for the educational needs of all children, especially those with physical and mental challenges.
- Compassion for students with special needs.
- Commitment to help children with special needs become a vital part of the community.
- Effort to provide valuable and practical life experiences for students with special needs.
- Willingness to share knowledge, skills, and experiences with colleagues in order to strengthen educational programs and pedagogy.
- Initiative to seek and provide services for students with special needs.

The Nomination Process

The CAIU wishes to recognize an individual whose commitment to and service in the field of special education exemplifies the qualities of an educational leader and pioneer such as Josephine J. Decima. Any educator of students with special needs who works within the CAIU service area will be eligible to be nominated for the award. Nominees must hold PA Level II Certification in the area of special education.