

Nominee:

Dr. Carol Utay
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Nominator:

Diane Hartman
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ABOARD

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Attn: Nancy Albinini

It is with the utmost confidence and pride that I would like to nominate Dr. Carol Utay for the Grandin Award. In my life, I have come across many inspiring individuals, but Carol is the one person that truly sticks out in my mind for being a tireless advocate for children with autism.

Ever since I met her through my work at the Metal Health Association I have been continually impressed with her commitment and dedication to children with special needs. Carol graduated from East Texas State University with a doctorate in Special Education, and since then, she has made it her life’s mission to improve the lives of children.

After spending 30 years in various positions in the education community, Carol Utay began what would become her lifelong legacy, Total Learning Centers. Based in the Pittsburgh area, TLC prepares students today for success tomorrow through direct, intensive, research-based methods to ensure significant gains in reading, writing, math, attention, processing, working memory and more. Specializing in remediation for students with learning disabilities, Dr. Carol Utay and her staff have been helping students succeed educationally, while feeling good about themselves in the process, since 1999.

Thanks to Dr. Carol’s expertise and fearless defender for education for all, TLC is one of the premier teaching facilities for children with autism. We have full-time and after-school students that are on the autism spectrum. One full time student has been coming to TLC for three years as his primary school. When he first arrived, he struggled to read 2nd grade material and actively refused social interaction. Now, he has progressed to reading at a 6th grade level and will actively seek out social interactions with peers and adults.

Another student has just begun his journey at Total Learning Centers. This student is on the autism spectrum, has an anxiety disorder, misophonia, phonophobia, and post-traumatic stress disorder. While many schools have neither the expertise nor resources to provide services to a child with such issues, “Dr. Carol” and her Total Learning Centers staff consider this a unique opportunity to provide consistent and professional remediation to ensure he will receive the best possible education.

Outside of Total Learning Centers, Carol is an Advisory Board member of Achieving in Higher Education with Autism and Developmental Disabilities (AHEADD) and the Western Pennsylvania International Dyslexia Association.

I am sure that there are many deserving candidates, but with decades of experience helping thousands of children on the autism spectrum make meaningful gains, an unflinching commitment to education, and an innate ability to inspire, I believe Dr. Carol Utay is the *best* candidate for the Grandin Award.

Sincerely,

Diane Hartman