

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Magnolia Elementary Named 2015 Maryland School of Character**

Harford County Public Schools is pleased to announce that Character.org, a national advocate and leader for the character education movement, named Magnolia Elementary a 2015 Maryland School of Character. The program recognized Magnolia Elementary as a school that has demonstrated its use of character development to drive a positive impact on academics, student behavior, and school climate. Magnolia Elementary, located in Joppa with a student population of 497, is one of just 80 schools across the country awarded this distinction.

“Utilizing components of character education is a large part of our daily routines at Magnolia Elementary,” said Magnolia Elementary School Principal Patricia Mason. “We are grateful for Character.org and its efforts to create a state and national discussion on the importance of character in education. We are proud that we will have this distinction for years to come and will continue our steadfast efforts to enhance student’s lives at Magnolia Elementary.”

Magnolia Elementary School considers itself a family and is actively engaged in learning and service, making every effort to have a positive influence in the greater community. The school focuses on five invaluable character traits, including responsibility, respect, cooperation, encouragement, and perseverance. Based on these traits, five ‘Houses’ were established in Magnolia Elementary to build a connection, not only between students and staff, but also with extended families. Each House corresponds with a character trait and includes students from Pre-K through five. During House meetings, students participate in lessons that develop their understanding of the five character traits and how caring and compassion can have a positive effect in their lives.

This year, the school integrated Rachel's Challenge curriculum into its weekly House meetings. The Rachel's Challenge curriculum focuses on kindness and compassion. In addition to the character lessons, a variety of service learning projects are planned by House leaders, including making and sending cards to veterans, packing food for students in need, and cleaning school grounds. We are a family at our school and do anything it takes to make a positive impact.

The [Schools of Character](#) application process is an opportunity for schools and districts to receive thoughtful feedback for growth and excellence in the area of character development through Character.org’s [11 Principles of Effective Character Education](#) framework. It is also a method of recognizing exemplary schools and districts in the nation.

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In addition to being named a 2015 Maryland School of Character, Magnolia Elementary School was just recognized as the 2015 recipient of Vision in Action: The ASCD Whole Child Award; was the 2014 Gold Award recipient from Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS); and was the Maryland Center for Character Education at Stevenson University School of the Year for 2013-14.

Since its inception, Character.org has awarded more than 500 schools with the distinction of State School of Character. Criteria for the designation are based on Character.org's 11 Principles of Effective Character Education, which includes providing students with opportunities for moral action, fostering shared leadership and engaging families and communities as partners in character-building efforts.

*About Character.org: Founded in 1993, Character.org, is a national nonprofit based in Washington, D.C. It works with schools and districts to inspire, educate and empower young people to be ethical and engaged citizens. It is led by education leaders who are dedicated to youth learning how to be both smart and good through the advancement of quality character development in all schools. The impact of this is seen through improved academic achievement, decline in behavioral problems such as truancy and an increase in an overall positive school climate. Visit [www.character.org](http://www.character.org) to learn more about the National Forum and the Schools of Character program.*

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