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For Immediate Release:

Aberdeen Public Schools Foundation Presents Golden Apple Awards

Aberdeen, SD – The Aberdeen Public Schools Foundation announced the third annual Golden Apple Awards to recognize individuals that are dedicated, inspiring, and making a difference in the Aberdeen School District. This year’s honorees were Brian Hatzenbeller, Carla Clark and Ross Burdick. Each received \$500 and a golden apple.

Brian Hatzenbeller, Simmons Elementary Custodian, goes above and beyond on a daily basis. He helps out everywhere around the school and never has to be asked twice to do anything. He completes all of his jobs with a fantastic attitude. He helps maintain the culture of our school by helping staff with a great attitude and fun demeanor. His practical jokes keep us laughing and on our toes.

Hatzenbeller has been employed in the school district for 29 years in various capacities. He has been responsible for ordering supplies, working on doors, cleaning bathrooms, setting up and tearing down for events, helping out at lunch, working on copiers and laminators, keeping the sidewalks clear of snow and ice, helping kids with stuck coats and knots in their shoes, and serving as a member of the Crisis Management Team. Over the years he has taken inventory of District equipment, driven the school district van between schools for 25 years

without a single accident, and made around 5 million copies a year. He approaches each day with his mantra “It’s for the kids,” which is evident in all that he does.

The dedication of **Carla Clark**, Elementary Library & Media Center Specialist, to all staff and students is beyond compare. The resources she is able to provide for staff and students allow classroom learning opportunities to be more meaningful and memorable. Teachers call on Clark to assist with big projects in the classroom where she can be seen leading students through research projects, introducing programs that allow students to connect with others across the world, or simply talking with students. Our students see her passion and are inspired and excited to learn more. Clark’s behind the scenes work puts her above the rest. She comes well-prepared by having student accounts created and step-by-step instructions for students to follow. She is willing to work with students in a whole class setting or one-on-one. Without her help, our projects would not be possible to the extent that they are completed.

Clark’s work ethic is inspiring and compares to no other. Not only is she a dedicated professional, graduate student, church volunteer, and loving mother and wife; she also helps operate her family’s farm. Clark has been honored as the SD Agriculture in the Classroom Teacher of the Year, SD Counts Teacher Leader, and has been a cooperating teacher for NSU teacher candidates.

Ross Burdick, Network Support Specialist, is an outstanding candidate for the Golden Apple Award because of his dedication to the Aberdeen School District. He is always willing to help and assist anyone with their needs. He makes you feel as if your need or situation is his most important task. He always has a “can do” attitude and a smile on his face. Burdick is a very humble individual who does not look for accolades, but models kindness, reliability, a strong work ethic, and dedication to his fellow co-workers and to the students of the District. Even when running into Burdick outside of the work day, he always shows the same exceptional qualities.

In his current assignment, Burdick has the privilege to interact with a wide variety of people-peers, clients, staff, and students. He is rewarded by not only being able to solve an issue for someone, but to see them light up when he is able to teach them something about it. The best part of his job is being able to contribute to our future and the future of our kids.

The Golden Apple Awards are a special project of the Aberdeen Public Schools Foundation. For more information, contact the Aberdeen Public Schools Foundation at 605-725-7118, Gretchen.Sharp@k12.sd.us, or visit the foundation website at <https://aberdeen.k12.sd.us/foundation>. The Aberdeen Public Schools Foundation is a non-profit organization that promotes excellence in education by forging partnerships among the schools, community and alumni.

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Attached photo – Carla Clark, Brian Hatzenbeller, and Ross Burdick