



News Release

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Back to School: Symetra and Seattle Seahawks Celebrate 12th Season of Honoring Great Teachers as New Academic Year Gets Underway

Mill Creek Middle School's Kailey Shepard is 234th teacher recognized as Symetra Hero in the Classroom

BELLEVUE, Wash.—(Sept. 11, 2017)—Symetra and the Seattle Seahawks kicked off the 12th season of the Symetra Heroes in the Classroom® teacher-recognition program with a surprise presentation at Mill Creek Middle School in Kent, Washington. Seahawks mascot Blitz was on hand to honor Kailey Shepard during a Sept. 8 school assembly, helping the social studies teacher raise a special 12 flag as part of the festivities.

“Look up ‘excellent teaching’ in the dictionary and you will find Kailey Shepard’s picture. A second-generation social studies teacher here in Kent, she is an integral part of Mill Creek Middle School,” said Nanette Navarro, a Kent School District colleague, who nominated Shepard for the Symetra Heroes in the Classroom award. “Kailey wholly dedicates herself to her profession and her students. Immediately after earning her master’s degree in her second year of teaching, she pursued an English Language Learners endorsement in order to better serve a diverse student population represented by 125 languages. She teaches these kids about the world and has a way with young people that makes them feel loved, respected, and excited to learn!”

Shepard is one of 16 K–12 teachers that will be honored for educational excellence in the Symetra Heroes in the Classroom program during the 2017 NFL season. More than 200 Puget Sound-area teachers have been celebrated since the program’s inception in 2006.

“Great teachers make such a powerful contribution to students’ lives. We feel privileged to be able to honor the dedication and inspiration they deliver in classrooms every day,” said Tracy Wort, assistant director, Community Relations at Symetra. “We know there are so many wonderful educators throughout our area—and we’re always on the lookout for a compelling nomination!”

Symetra Heroes in the Classroom are recognized in front of their students and peers at surprise in-school presentations. Symetra makes a \$2,000 donation to each teacher-Hero’s school for classroom books and supplies.

Heroes honorees also receive tickets to a Seahawks home game, where they are acknowledged during on-field presentations at CenturyLink Field. Shepard will be recognized at the Sept. 17 game when the Seahawks take on the San Francisco 49ers.

“It has been our honor to partner with Symetra to recognize 234 exceptional teacher ‘heroes,’ who are making a difference in the lives of their students,” said Seahawks VP Community Outreach Mike Flood. “These teachers embody the passion and commitment we hope to inspire in all the 12s.”

Teachers may be nominated by their principal, district staff, student or student's parent. Honorees are selected based on their ability to make a real difference in students' lives; to go above and beyond in their day-to-day responsibilities; and to help students build life skills. Nominations may be submitted through the program's online submission tool at www.SymetraHeroes.com/Seahawks.

About Symetra

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