

South Flint Tabernacle as they celebrate 30 years of worship, service, and spirituality under his guidance. I pray that he will continue to guide the congregation and serve the community for many, many years to come.

HONORING PAULETTE WALZ,
LEESBURG, FLORIDA

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2009

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Paulette Walz of Lake County, Florida. This past week, she was awarded the Social Security Administration's highest honorary award; the Commissioner's Citation. I cannot think of a more deserving recipient.

Born in a small town in middle Tennessee, she first began her work with Social Security recipients while working as a Claims Development clerk in the Cookeville, TN Social Security Office. From there she was promoted to the Service Representative position in Leesburg, FL and thus made her move to the 5th district, where she continues to work as the Public Affairs Specialist for Lake and Sumter Counties.

For the past 24 years, Paulette has done an exceptional job of both helping Social Security recipients with their every concern and in keeping SSA issues front and center. Her efforts span much farther than her office however; she utilizes print, radio and TV to educate recipients about the Social Security options available to them. Paulette hosts two weekly radio shows in The Villages, as well as records weekly Public Service Announcements. She also records a 30 minute television program three times a month where she and her guests discuss programs the Agency administers. Additionally, she utilizes her weekly column in The Villages Daily Sun to respond to congressional inquiries regarding Social Security.

When she is not covering the issue in the media, Paulette teaches a monthly class on SSA benefits at The Villages Life Long Learning College. Additionally, she conducts pre-release seminars at area Correctional Institutions, including the Coleman Federal Correctional Complex, the largest federal prison in the United States. She was also instrumental in implementing the North Florida Area's eServices Outreach Pilot Program; this initiative offers individuals who are close to retirement assistance in making an informed decision as to when to retire.

I have only scratched the service on all she has accomplished. From working first hand with Paulette on many Social Security issues, I can tell you that her expertise and dedication are invaluable.

I congratulate her on this prestigious honor and wish her only the very best in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO JESUS GONZALES,
RECIPIENT OF THE 2009 ST. MADELEINE SOPHIE AWARDS, SACRED HEART SCHOOLS

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 7, 2009

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Jesus Gonzales, a recipient of the prestigious St. Madeleine Sophie Award from Sacred Heart Schools. Established in the year 2000, the St. Madeleine Sophie Award honors individuals in the Sacred Heart community who have made a sustained and significant contribution to the Schools and embody the Goals and Criteria of a Sacred Heart education. The individuals honored are selected by a committee comprised of the senior administrative team in conjunction with the Chair of the Board of Trustees and are honored at a reception and at the Mass of the Holy Spirit, the first all-school liturgy of the school year. The recipients will be VIP guests at various SHS events throughout the year and featured in their alumni magazine, The Heart of the Matter, for their commitment to the mission of Sacred Heart education.

This year, Jesus Gonzales was chosen, along with two other distinguished recipients, to be recognized with the Award for his tireless work and commitment to the Sacred Heart School as the Physical Plant Manager. His award was presented by Mr. Dan Greenleaf, who gave this speech at the Awards Ceremony in tribute to Jesus:

Jesus Gonzales is a lover. What I mean here is his heart is full of love.

He shares that love everyday with the students, faculty, staff, administration and parents at Sacred Heart Schools.

Which is not always easy. But he gives this love. And he gets love in return.

He shares this love everyday of his life with his brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews and friends.

He has a lot of love to give and he gets lots in return. Which is no surprise to me because I knew his father Gabriel.

Gabriel didn't speak English and I don't speak Spanish but we still knew each other well.

Gabriel raised 8 wonderful kids into happy productive adults while he was working here at Sacred Heart.

The family is: Theresa, Gabriel Jr., Vidal, Valentine, Jesus, Urlinda, Maria and Tony.

This is a very close family who hold on tightly to their heritage while raising their own families here in the melting pot of the Bay Area.

They see each other every day. They share meals, they vacation together, they hang out on the porch doing nothing together, they have strong relationships with each others children. They give love to each other and they get love from each other.

I tell you this because the family is so much of who Jesus is.

Jesus first stepped on the Sacred Heart campus in 1981, when he was 5 years old. One of Jesus' oldest memories on the campus was Sr. Mesa's chickens and rabbits down by the shop.

Sr. Mesa would sell the rabbits for \$1 each, dead or alive. They tasted like chicken. At that time, there was: no McGanney Gym, no Montessori, no Spieker Pavilion, no Apartments, no football field/field house.

Sr. Lawrence had warm cookies in the Main Building and Jesus had a great place to grow up.

His 14th summer, 1989, was his first summer working for Sacred Heart. He painted speed bumps and dug irrigation trenches.

Always a big smile on his face and usually a wise crack to go with it to try and deflect me from seeing how sore he was from swinging the pick.

In high school he worked in the Gator Pit where he would flash those green eyes and talk with all of the high school girls because, well, heck, he was in high school too.

In 1997 he was hired full time in the Maintenance Department.

Two years later he was put in charge of St. Joseph's and the Montessori School and his job changed from actually physically hands on working, to management and dealing with the administration, faculty, coaches, parents and neighbors. He was in his element, this was his strength. He was happier than a pig wallowing in slop. He did well.

In 2003 he was promoted to "Physical Plant Manager" in charge of all of the buildings on the campus. There are many decisions made by the Board and the Operations Department and they get handed down to Jesus and his crew.

They might have a list of 25 things to do. They do 10 of them and check the list again and it's up to 30 things to do. It never ends.

Jesus gets to deal with everyone on campus by e-mail, phone and face-to-face. That starts with his crew of about 20 maintenance and housekeeping personnel. They are the front lines. They are the men and women in the trenches. They are the people we all depend on but might not realize it.

Jesus is very fair with his crew. He is consistent in dealing with 20 personalities. He evaluates, makes changes and implements these changes fairly across the board. He can be stern and honest when he needs to be, but he talks to them the same way he would expect someone to talk to him.

Most of his conversations are peppered with humor. He listens, I mean really listens and makes informed decisions. He is not above his crew.

Then he deals with everyone else: administrators, teachers, parents, vendors, police department, fire department, city hall, contractors.

There is nobody that he doesn't approach with a smile and an open mind. He is patient. He is organized, and he will give you all his time to get you what you need.

In the big picture he knows why he's here. I've heard him say it before, "We are here for the kids." It is that easy. You give love, you get love, "We are here for the kids."

He is who his father and family and maybe even a little bit of Sacred Heart raised him to be.

A child of the Sacred Heart.

But still after all of this, there is still one person who remains the center of his life. Someone who goes for camping, fishing, bowling and makes him laugh. Someone who helps him get ready for work in the morning.

That most special someone in his life is his son Vidal who is now 8 years old and who gets to grow up in the loving glow of his father and the whole Gonzales family.

Madam Speaker, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in offering our congratulations to Jesus Gonzales on the very special occasion of being chosen for the St. Madeleine Sophie Award and for all he does daily to strengthen our community and our country.