

Mandy Edwards: Tireless advocate for youth

For 16 years, she has been an ambassador for NEWESD 101. Her audience: Regional youth looking for a second chance to complete school, start a career or simply reinvent themselves.

In 2002, Edwards came to NEWESD 101 to lead the Washington Reading Corps. Through the years, her position expanded to include the Spokane Service Team, AmeriCorps and YouthBuild programs, all aimed at helping students complete high school while simultaneously training for careers, primarily in construction trades and health care.

Along the way, her students built or assisted with major construction of 28 new homes for low-income families, remodeled another 150 homes and volunteered thousands of hours to community service project. Edwards' impact on individual lives – nearly 1,400 students in AmeriCorps alone – has been incalculable.



Edwards' enthusiasm on display at the June 2015 YouthBuild graduation

Of course, none of it would have been possible without money. Again, Edwards was at the center of action, helping the ESD secure and administer close to \$12 million in competitive federal grants, plus in-kind donations from partners exceeding another \$1 million.

Yes, whether measured in dollars secured, degrees earned or careers started, Edwards has been a significant difference-maker in the community.

But alas, all good things must end. Edwards now departs NEWESD 101 for the next chapter in her life, which begins with her own return to the classroom.

She is returning to school full time to pursue a graduate degree in adult education from Eastern Washington University.

In a farewell message to the NEWESD 101 staff, Edwards thanked colleagues for their dedication, support and commitment to youth. Those feelings run both ways. Thank you, Mandy, for a job well done and best of luck as you write the next chapter in your book of public service.

Story posted: December 3, 2018

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