Premera Blue Cross, Seattle Storm Team Up to Honor All-Star Washington Educators

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Mountlake Terrace, Wash. -- Premera Blue Cross, one of the Pacific Northwest's largest not-for-profit health plans, teamed up with the WNBA's Seattle Storm to recognize five All-Star Washington educators at the Storm's Back-to-School game on Monday, Sept. 1.

As part of the new Premera All-Stars program, the public was invited to nominate school employees who consistently make a meaningful difference, whether they're teachers, paraeducators, bus drivers, or school counselors.

"A school, like the Storm basketball team, thrives on the strengths of a diverse team," said Eric Trott, Vice President of Marketing & Communications, Premera Blue Cross. "This year's lineup of All-Star educators reflects the incredible depth of talent in our schools, including a fifth-grade teacher, a coach, a counselor, a special education instructional assistant and a behavioral health specialist. Their dedication reminds us that every role matters, and every student deserves a champion."

This year's honorees received on-court recognition at the Storm's Back-to-School game against the Los Angeles Sparks. Each educator also received a personalized Storm jersey and a $1,000 check for their school district

These educators are making lasting impacts on their student's lives. Sometimes, that impact comes from expected places, such as the detention room managed by behavioral specialist Brandin Chapman at Kamiak High School in Mukilteo, Wash.

With a background in mental health counseling, Chapman has redefined the purpose of detention. "Brandin goes above and beyond to connect with the most challenging students assigned to her resource room," said one nominator. "She talks with the students, works with them on homework, and ensures they don't have to return to her room."

Chapman's detailed record-keeping also revealed disparities in how detentions were issued. Her analysis and advocacy are helping administrators improve the school's disciplinary system.

Chapman isn't the only All-Star taking creative approaches. At Glacier Middle School, counselor and coach Priscilla Ponce saw that more students wanted to play volleyball than the team could accommodate. Instead of turning students away, she created a volleyball clinic that also focused on social and emotional learning.

"Ponce came up with a volleyball clinic that also centered social and emotional skills as a way to involve the students' interests with other important skills for adolescents to learn," one nominator said. "The clinic had a huge turn out and many students built connections and worked on their social and emotional skills while strengthening their sportsmanship."

The partnership between the Seattle Storm and Premera reflects a shared commitment to highlighting those who make a lasting impact in Washington's schools. Through the Premera All-Stars program, the organizations are recognizing the dedication and leadership of school employees whose work strengths student success and builds stronger communities across the state.

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About Premera Blue Cross
Premera Blue Cross, a not-for-profit, independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association based in Mountlake Terrace, Wash., is a leading health plan in the Pacific Northwest, providing comprehensive health benefits and tailored services to more than 2.5 million people, from individuals to Fortune 100 companies.