

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS



### MALINEE NEELAMEGAM

2018 Dissertation Fellow

“It is an honor to receive the Dissertation Fellowship from The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. The ABD

(all but dissertation) finish line is challenging, and the fellowship will allow me to work towards completing my doctoral journey successfully. Beyond the financial assistance, the fellowship provides doctoral students like me the motivation and the reassurance of the importance of the work we do.”



### LIBERATUS J. RWEBUGISA

2018 Love of Learning Award Recipient

“My interest in pursuing a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership is centered around my

compassion to improve the educational opportunities, and by extension, the lives and well-being of people in rural, poverty-stricken communities. The Love of Learning Award from Phi Kappa Phi in support of my dissertation research in rural Tanzania is a substantial contribution to the achievement of my long-term career and professional goals.”



### GRACE KINNER

2018 Study Abroad Grant Recipient

“Being awarded the Phi Kappa Phi Study Abroad Grant truly opened doors

for me into places I had only dreamed of going before. Without the award, I would not have been able to travel to Mexico to better my grasp of the Spanish language, understand nuances of cultures other than my own, and develop the independence that studying abroad requires of you. I am truly grateful to Phi Kappa Phi for believing in me and helping me to achieve my goals.”



Marcy Davis, principal of John F. Kennedy Elementary School (left); Texas A&M-Corpus Christi students Maddie Woods and Kaela Mathis; TAMU-CC professor Bethanie Pletcher; TAMU-CC student Audrey Barnes; and Kennedy Elementary Vice Principal Roana Rivera.



Bethanie Pletcher greets students Zadia Gallegos, eight, and Jaleesa Ramirez, seven, as they prepare for their reading tutoring session.



Bethanie Pletcher, Audrey Barnes, Maddie Woods and Roana Rivera.

## A LOVE FOR LITERACY

Bethanie Pletcher, assistant professor of literacy education at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, knows the impact that early literacy experiences can have on a child’s life. With the assistance of a 2018 Literacy Grant from Phi Kappa Phi, Pletcher established a partnership between Texas A&M-Corpus Christi’s College of Education and Human Development and the John F. Kennedy Elementary School in Corpus Christi to help young learners struggling with literacy.

The initiative, Islanders Helping the Early Acceleration of Readers Together (iHeart), pairs undergraduate teacher candidates with second-grade students for small-group instruction using specialized literacy materials. The program’s aim is to engage children in instructional-level reading in order to accelerate their reading skills and strategy use while also instilling a love for literacy early in the student’s education.

“The Response to Intervention (RTI) model is used to assess and monitor students who might otherwise fall through the cracks. The children who need supplemental reading instruction under the RTI model deserve high-quality books that contain bright photos and interesting stories and topics. Because of this grant, we are able to provide these materials,” Pletcher said.

“We are extremely grateful for this Literacy Grant from Phi Kappa Phi as purchasing books for our undergraduate student tutors and children to use during tutorial sessions is necessary for the successful continuation of our project.”



TAMU-CC student Maddie Woods works with a small group of second-graders on literacy instruction.