

**HISD educator nominated for national LifeChanger of the Year award**

 *July 18, 2018* – Olga Catoni, a fifth-grade teacher at The School at Saint George Place, has been nominated for the 2018-2019 national LifeChanger of the Year award.

 Catoni is being recognized as a LifeChanger because of her advocacy for the Hispanic community. She created a club for Spanish-speaking parents and holds monthly meetings to discuss school information and answer questions. She also created a homework club to help students lacking the proper help or technology do their homework after school.

 As an immigrant herself, Catoni invests her time in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms because she understands the struggles that ESL students encounter on a daily basis. She has also served on the school’s Shared Decision-Making Committee (SDMC), a committee that addresses concerns regarding planning, school organization, professional development, and staffing.

 Catoni was nominated by an anonymous family member.

 "She always has a smile and gives the kids 1,000 percent,” said her nominator. “I know for a fact that she's committed to involving herself in each child's home life, ensuring a tight link with parents. I admire her so much because she has gone through the lowest of lows, yet has ensured that each child has felt special.”

 Sponsored by the National Life Group Foundation, LifeChanger of the Year recognizes and rewards the very best K-12 educators and school district employees across the United States who are making a difference in the lives of students by exemplifying excellence, positive influence and leadership.

 Each school year, LifeChanger of the Year receives hundreds of nominations from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Seventeen individual LifeChanger of the Year awards will be given during the 2018-2019 school year.

* One Grand Prize Winner will receive $10,000 to be shared with their school/district.
* Four Grand Prize Finalists will receive $5,000 to be shared with their school/district.
* Ten LifeChanger Award Winners will receive $3,000 to be shared with their school/district.
* One Spirit Award Winner will receive $5,000 to be shared with their school/district. This award is given to the nominee whose community demonstrates the most support for their nomination.
* One Spotlight Award Winner will receive $5,000 to be shared with their school or district. This award is given to a nominee in a specific discipline each year. For 2018-19, the Spotlight Award will be given to a nominee who works in a counseling role (e.g, guidance counselor, social worker).

Winners are announced via surprise award ceremonies held at their schools. The grand prize finalists will also be honored at a national awards ceremony in May 2019 in Hawaii, where the Grand Prize Winner will be revealed. Winners are chosen by a selection committee comprised of former winners and education professionals.

 To view Catoni’s LifeChanger of the Year nominee profile, or to nominate someone from your school community, visit [www.LifeChangeroftheYear.com](http://app.lifechangeroftheyear.com/nomination_detail.cfm?NominationID=1751&NominationYear=2018).