



Williamsville Junior High School and Family Guidance Center Awarded 2026 Illinois Principals Association's "Reaching Out and Building Bridges" Award

Clay Shoufler, principal of Williamsville Junior High School in Williamsville, and the Family Guidance Center of Springfield have received the 2026 IPA Reaching Out & Building Bridges Award for their partnership to implement the "Too Good for Drugs" prevention program. The award is presented by the Illinois Principals Association and sponsored by Horace Mann Companies.

The Reaching Out & Building Bridges Award was created to recognize an IPA principal or assistant principal, and an agency, association, or community member outstanding efforts in creating partnerships between schools, principals, associations, and organizations for the betterment of all.

Mr. Shoufler has developed a successful partnership with FGC's Prevention Program Manager, Kristen Errett, to implement the "Too Good for Drugs" prevention program. This collaboration allows trained prevention specialists from FGC to deliver structured, research-based lessons focused on healthy decision-making, goal setting, and substance abuse prevention. The program is offered free of charge to the school district. Through this partnership, students gain valuable skills in resisting peer pressure, managing emotions, and making responsible choices - skills that align closely with the district's focus on educating the whole child and supporting the district's mission to foster safe, healthy, and informed students.

Shoufler shared: "We are taking intentional steps to ensure the 'Too Good for Drugs' program remains a consistent part of our prevention efforts. We coordinate annual scheduling and ensure smooth delivery of programming for each grade level and collaborate with the FGC team to align the lessons with our existing health and wellness curriculum. This makes the program an integrated, rather than supplemental, component of student learning. Additionally, program outcomes and student feedback are shared with district leadership to highlight the positive impact, reinforcing the value of continued participation. By fostering strong relationships, maintaining program visibility, and aligning goals with our district's whole-child initiatives, we are building a sustainable framework to keep this vital partnership active for years to come."

State winners will be recognized at the awards ceremony during the 2026 IPA Education Leaders Annual Conference October 18-20.

The Illinois Principals Association serves over 6,900 educational leaders statewide, whose mission is to develop, support, and advocate for innovative educational leaders. The Reaching Out & Building Bridges Award is supported by Horace Mann Companies of Springfield, IL. For more information about the IPA, please visit www.ilprincipals.org.

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