



2023 Outstanding Volunteer Award Recipient:

Martha Savage

Nomination Letter

Dear Board at WAESOL,

We would like to recommend Martha Savage for the 2023 WAESOL Outstanding Volunteer Award. She is an incredibly skilled ESOL professional who has demonstrated outstanding dedication to the advancement of multilingual English learners and teachers in the Spokane community through her teaching, teacher-training, and volunteer work. Many of us know Martha Savage from her esteemed career at Gonzaga University—as a professor in the academic ESL program, the MA/TESOL program, and the Education Department who trained many K-12 teachers and ESOL teachers locally and globally. As she taught, Martha consistently brightened her decades-long career as a volunteer.

From 2014 to 2021, Martha’s service made an impact regionally as she volunteered as a WAESOL board member president-elect, president, and past president. At WAESOL and TESOL conferences, Martha played an integral part in the success of those events as a planner, volunteer, and an admired presenter. Indeed, as WAESOL President in 2020, Martha was passionate about providing online educational opportunities for educators to continue professional development at a time when most of these opportunities were canceled. Working alongside WAESOL Executive Director, Joan Nelson, they tackled numerous technological and logistical challenges of planning an online conference. Her initiative rallied the team of people needed to successfully launch the first-ever WAESOL conference fully online, thereby providing professional connections when many of us needed them most.

Martha has also volunteered in a variety of local programs to support the Spokane immigrant and refugee population. She has served at the refugee resettlement agency, World Relief, to work with families and train volunteers in providing literacy tutoring and support to students. Along with her husband, Bob Savage, they have advocated for families who need to navigate the new and complex systems of housing, social services, and health care. In addition to World Relief, Martha volunteers at the Barton English Language School, a local non-profit organization founded in 1969 that offers free English language classes for adults along with childcare for its students. Martha has applied her decades of research and practice in literacy to enrich the reading and writing skills of multilingual adults in our community, including those who are busy raising children. Not only does she teach at the school, but she is also a constant presence at the Barton School information table at many events including World Refugee Day. Martha significance is made visible by the joy on the faces of the many who line up to talk with her--the K-12 teachers she trained, the former refugee families she supported as they resettled, the adults whose literacy she enhanced, and her colleagues from higher educational settings.

We see the local impact as Martha moves through our community, but her volunteering extends beyond our experiences in Spokane and the Spokane region. Martha spent vacations volunteering as an EFL teacher for Partners International, a non-governmental organization. In several countries, sometimes to classes of over a hundred students, Martha would facilitate English lessons. Would there be computers? An internet connection? What resources would be available for these lessons? The only resources assured would be Martha's expertise, her extraordinary heart for service, and her ability to create a space for significant learning.

Martha's inspirational and passionate commitment to teachers and students of all ages in the ESOL community has inspired generations of volunteers, teachers, and students, making her a highly deserving candidate for the **2023 WAESOL Outstanding Volunteer Award**.

Thank you for your consideration of this candidate,

Naomi Hagen

ELD, Title III, K-12 TOSA
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Beth Ankcorn

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