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Zirkle Fruit's Courtney Lane honored

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Courtney Lane of Zirkle Fruit Co. is the Washington Apple Education Foundation Individual Volunteer of the Year. Her recognition was announced last week at a company production meeting held in Selah, WA. While the meeting was pre-planned, the interruption from WAEF with the special announcement occurred as a surprise to her.

Lane has been a volunteer for WAEF for multiple years. She focuses her WAEF attention primarily on assisting current WAEF scholarship recipients prepare to graduate from college career-ready. This year she worked with WAEF students at a career exploration event focused on the human resources field, and later conducted a workshop on successfully launching careers, all completed through video conferencing. In the workshop, Lane discussed applying for jobs, appropriate follow up

after an interview, and negotiating a salary offer.

WAEF Chairman Chris Willett shared appreciation for Lane and her employer Zirkle Fruit Co." "It is the Courtneys of this world that make a scholarship from WAEF much more valuable than a financial investment. Courtney's dedication, and others that join her, makes it possible for students to graduate from college with a solid start to a career network, human skills to advance their careers, and confidence that they know how to launch their careers."

Lane is the human resources manager for warehouse operations. She has been employed at the company for 12 years. In her HR role, she works closely with leadership and employees on a daily basis, providing guidance, support and resources. This includes working with WAEF to disseminate scholarship information to company employees and organize workshops and information exchange about how parents can help their students earn scholarships and pay for college.

Mandy Bruce is the human resources director for Zirkle Fruit Co. and works directly with Lane. "Courtney is an amazing part of our team. She is motivated, creative and gives 110 percent to everything she does. We are so very proud of her and the impacts that she has both inside and outside of Zirkle Fruit. It is a true pleasure to get to work with her," said Bruce.

Lane is married to Brian Lane and they have two children. She is a graduate of Washington State University where she earned a bachelor's degree in Communications. Lane's demonstrated passion for people has a long history. In college she worked as a freshmen workshop leader where she engaged in team building, mentoring and find new and interesting ways to increase student participation in their freshman year of college.

Each year nearly 200 volunteers participate with WAEF to provide support for students and the tree fruit industry non-profit. Volunteer roles include student mentoring, scholarship selection, governance committee service, care package delivery, and other valuable assistance.

Annually WAEF recognizes an Organization Volunteer of the Year and Alumni Volunteer of the Year in addition to the Individual Volunteer of the Year. This year, CMI Orchards was recognized as the Organization Volunteer of the Year and Anika Grubbs as the Alumni Volunteer of the Year. These awards were shared earlier in the month. In years past, a combined event was held recognizing all volunteers at one time. Due to COVID-19, individual announcements are occurring this month.

The Washington Apple Education Foundation is the charity of the tree fruit industry. It was founded in 1996 and is best known for its scholarship program. Annually, over \$1 million is contributed to students in the form of scholarships through WAEF from tree fruit industry families and companies.

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