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Press release : 2003 : 05 : 19 : 'Can Do' Mechanic Named Top Campus Staffer

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Can Do’ Mechanic Named Top Campus Staffer - USF St. Petersburg

Keith Childs, a 13-year employee of USF St. Petersburg, was named the campus’ outstanding staff member for the year. He was recognized in a May 13 ceremony on the Tampa campus honoring outstanding staff from all USF campuses.

A maintenance mechanic in the Physical Plant, Childs has that “can-do spirit,” according to Ron Bugg, director of the Physical Plant and one of four persons who nominated him.

Childs was originally part of a construction crew known to university staff as “the wrecking crew,” and Bugg. He noted that as part of that team Childs installed a new air conditioning system in the World War II-era Marine Science building, remodelled many Marine Science labs, converted a warehouse into classrooms and offices, and converted six residence buildings to labs, offices and classrooms.

Bugg went on to note, “Keith and his crew have installed thousands of feet of plumbing and electrical lines on campus. They did all of this work and just about any other dirty and nasty job that no one else would do. All of the work was done without any sign of displeasure – it was done just because ‘we can do it.’ This crew saved the University hundreds of thousands of dollars, possibly more.”

Robert Jolley, director of the College of Marine Sciences, said that Childs’ “responsiveness to our frantic phone calls for help and his willingness to come in at all hours to take care of some emergency has gone a long way toward keeping our teaching and research on track.” All of Childs’ work, Jolley said in his nomination, is done with “pride and competence.”

Because Childs usually works the night shift, he often encounters students and visitors on campus, noted Dr. Bill Heller, professor of special education and former campus executive officer. “Whether it was helping students find their classrooms at the beginning of each semester, assisting individuals find the site of their event, or just assisting someone who needs help, Keith was always there,” said Heller. “He was always there with a friendly ‘can I help’ greeting and a personal follow-through to make sure the person found his or her way to the right place or had their questions answered by someone who had the appropriate information.”

Childs is a “visible troubleshooter” who can always be turned to for assistance, said Sudsy Tschiderer, special events coordinator. “When a special need occurs on campus or a project is short-handed, Keith is a willing worker. He is never one to announce that a task isn’t in his job description and accepts additional assignments cheerfully.”

Tschiderer noted that Childs volunteers his free time for many campus and off-campus projects, including helping with setup and break-down for campus fund raisers and representing USF St. Petersburg in the annual SPCA Paws on Parade pet walk.

“Keith Childs is certainly a USF Treasure!” she said.