

NEWS

# MARK MARSHALL GOES ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR PDSB EDUCATION

IAIN COLPITTS

icolpitts@mississauga.net

Mon Apr. 18, 2019

When Mark Marshall was told he had won the Helen Des Roches Starfish Award, he admits he had to find out what it was.

Each year, the award is presented to a Peel District School Board employee who has made a significant difference in the lives of students facing obstacles to their education.

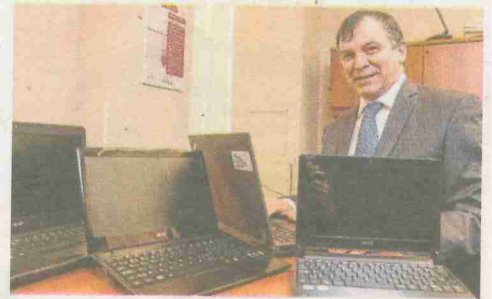
Since Marshall, manager of IT operations for the Peel Board, doesn't work directly with students or teachers, he was surprised about earning the award.

"I'm on the business side and it's not an award the business side ever wins or is involved in," said Marshall, who has worked with the Peel board for 30 years.

Ten years ago, he noticed a lot of laptops, tablets and other devices were being discarded improperly and thought of the idea to recycle them for students who need them.

"It was a good idea and there was support for it, but the logistics just made it impossible," he said. "About three years ago, I brought it back."

Over the last three years, 900 devices have



Bryon Johnson/Metroland

Mark Marshall recently won the Helen Des Roches Starfish Award.

been refurbished and distributed to students selected from the board's social worker department.

Through a partnership with Microsoft, Marshall and his team are allowed to put Microsoft's operating systems on the units. There are co-op students who sometimes help him refurbish the devices.

Most of the devices Marshall receives are between four and six years old, but he does receive some newer ones as well. He was provided with 90 laptops donated from a private business. The IT department usually works on an order of 25 devices at a time.

There have been times where he has gone beyond the call of duty with his work, often working after hours. Once when he was away on vacation, he received a request for a device from a social worker, but still had it ready for her the next day.