



# Mary Harris “Mother Jones” Organizing Award

## Rank & File Members of JCEA

*This award honors a CEA member(s) who embodies what it means to be an organizer, through the actions they have taken to organize internally or externally to increase capacity and build coalitions to enhance and protect public education.*

**CEA's new award goes to the members** of the Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA). The award's namesake, Mary Harris Jones, was an Irish-American teacher and dressmaker who earned the “Mother Jones” moniker as a labor union organizer in the late 1800s. The award honors our members who use collective action in support of public education.

JCEA faced a school board majority bloc after the November 2013 election. The once friendly board, which worked with JCEA over many years, was left with only two supporters. But the new board majority was anti-union, hiring a new superintendent from Douglas County and imposing a new salary system in violation of the master agreement. Citizens were alarmed at the board's violation of open meeting laws and limits on public comment. Students demonstrated over the board's attempt to censor AP U.S. History curriculum. By May 2015, a community-led group, Jeffco United for Action, launched a recall effort.

Rank-and-file JCEA members were key partners in the coalition which convinced voters to oust the three board members last November. Joining parents, community leaders, and other unions, JCEA members worked on the front lines of this historic campaign. They mobilized thousands of people by knocking on doors and hosting house parties, using their relationships with neighbors, friends, and each other to empower people and achieve a shared victory. JCEA members earned the right to be called “organizers” because they worked for and achieved systemic change in their district. Congratulations!