

Boston Youth Service Network Staff Excellence Award

Ed Norton, the Maritime Apprentice Program Co-Director, was honored with the first annual Boston Youth Service Network (BYSN) Staff Excellence Award in December 2010. BYSN's 15 member organizations each nominated a staff person who exemplified the qualities of compassion, leadership, ingenuity, and persistence that characterize excellence in working with high-risk youth. And, our own Ed Norton won!



In nominating Ed, we said, "Working with the most high-risk youth in the city is extraordinarily challenging. Few people are called to this field, and even fewer persist with the tireless resilience, compassion, generosity, creativity, and humor that characterize Ed Norton's work. Ed lives the lessons he hopes to teach – both to his "kids" and his colleagues. He knows that one real relationship with a caring adult – one true connection – can be the catalyst that turns the tide on cycles of failure in a young person's life. Ed is something of a genius at building trust with his students. He does this by unerringly standing by his work, consistently and generously always "being there" for his students, and building loving boundaries that instill confidence and comfort. That trust becomes the foundation of a willingness to engage in other, constructive relationships, and, often, to take the enormous risk of trying to change their lives for the better through participation in MAP, school, internships, employment, and family life. Ed is a powerful role model for his students and colleagues alike, and the cornerstone of MAP's emotional health."

We are extremely proud of Ed, all the more so because BYSN is so exceptional. A group of community-based organizations working collaboratively to provide alternative education and employment pathways for youth at risk, BYSN engages young people through a continuum of programs including nontraditional learning environments in alternative schools, career exploration programs to build job and life skills, integrated support services, and postsecondary connections. Many MAP apprentices are co-enrolled in BYSN partner programs offering high school diplomas, GEDs, and counseling services, and those activities – in concert with MAP – are key to their successes.