

North teacher Golden Apple finalist

A science teacher at Downers Grove North High School has been selected as a finalist in the 2016 Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching.

Jeff Grant is among 30 finalists who were selected from a pool of more than 400 nominations that represent ninth through 12th grade teachers from Chicago and the surrounding suburbs.

"I am very honored to be considered part of this esteemed group, but I could never do what I do without the help of my science department and these great kids that I get to teach and interact with on a daily basis," Grant said. "When I was a kid I

knew that this community was an amazing place to grow up in, and it is incredibly rewarding to now know that I am viewed by others as positively giving back to that same community."

The awards recognize and honor outstanding teachers for their role in building a stronger, better-educated society, according to Golden Apple.

North High Principal Scott Kasik said Grant is always looking for ways to get his students excited about science and help them understand the role science plays in their lives.

"Jeff's passion and enthusiasm

for teaching science is evident whenever you see him where he most loves to be--in' the classroom working with students," he said.

Grant, who has taught at North High since 2003, is also a North High alum. After graduating in 1998, he went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in secondary education from DePauw University and a Master's degree in the art of teaching from Aurora University. He is also a National Board Certified Teacher.

Grant said today's students are taking more science classes than ever before, noting that the anatomy and physiology course has become increasingly popular. He thinks that some of the interest is due to the sophisticated research they're performing in class.

The North High teacher also makes it a priority to

bring in real-world scientists into the classroom. He's hosted a neuroscientist from Northwestern and a botanist from The Morton Arboretum to come and present to his classes.

"Bringing in outside people gives students a chance to see what a 'real' scientist looks like, and that it's not a Frankenstein-type person with a lab coat and colored test tubes," Grant said. "We live in such a science-rich area, with Argonne, Fermilab, Ivy-league quality universities and museums that we can take advantage of to benefit our students."

The father of two daughters, Grant hopes to continue inspiring students to study science.

"Science is the underpinning of life, and it gives students a better appreciation for the world in general," he said.