


EDUCATION

Downers Grove teacher among 2016 Golden Apple recipients

A Downers Grove North High School science teacher received the surprise of a lifetime Monday afternoon. Golden Apple, a nonprofit that celebrates teaching excellence surprised Jeff Grant with the 2016 Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching. The awards recognize and honor outstanding teachers for their role in building a stronger, better-educated society.

An A.P. biology, anatomy and physiology teacher, Grant was among 10 Chicagoland teachers who received a surprise visit from the nonprofit this week and was presented the 2016 award.

The recipients were selected from a pool of more than 400 nominations, and represent 9th-12th grade teachers throughout Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. Recipients are nominated by their students, community members/parents and colleagues who have directly engaged with them and benefitted from their talent and passion.

"Grant always is looking to push the boundaries on new methods for students to experience science," the organization said in a news release announcing the winners. "He is a curricular leader, and restarted the anatomy and physiology classes at the school, after they didn't exist for 22 years."

The Downers Grove teacher is also a leader among his peers. For the past five years, Grant has organized science meetings, where teachers gather to

discuss concepts, activities and inter-disciplinary ideas. He also has partnered with the Morton Arboretum to bring a world-class researcher to his classroom to help students understand the research process.

"Grant pushes his students beyond the classroom and textbook to learn about real science," Golden Apple added.

For more than 30 years, Golden Apple has recognized outstanding teachers throughout Illinois each year. Created by founders Mike and Pat Koldyke, Golden Apple's mission is to inspire, develop and support teacher excellence in Illinois.

Each Golden Apple Award recipient receives a tuition-free, spring quarter sabbatical to study at Northwestern University. Each recipient also receives a \$5,000 cash award. Perhaps most importantly, award recipients become Fellows of the Golden Apple Academy of Educators, giving them a stronger voice and a larger stage from which to make a difference in education within Illinois and nationally.

"Research has shown that teachers set the course for student success and have the greatest effect on student learning," said Dominic Belmonte, president and CEO of Golden Apple. "Through their dedication, resourcefulness, inspiration, and genuine caring demeanor, this year's award recipients have created meaningful learning experiences that have changed their student's lives."