

## Jeff Grant among winners of Golden Apple Award

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**DOWNERS GROVE** – Students, colleagues, mentors and family members of Jeff Grant gathered in a classroom at Downers Grove North High School to watch as the science teacher was surprised with a 2016 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Golden Apple chose Grant as one of its winners among 400 applicants and 30 finalists from high schools in Illinois.

Grant said he was surprised by the award presentation.

“I was not expecting this,” he said. “I was expecting to be sitting in a meeting with some English and math teachers, talking about writing for the rest of the day.”

According to Golden Apple, the award recognizes teachers “for their role in building a stronger, better-educated society.”

Winners receive a \$5,000 award, a tuition-free spring quarter sabbatical to study at Northwestern University and a fellowship in the Golden Apple Academy of Educators.

Grant’s nomination for the Golden Apple Award cited his leadership in the classroom and the science department.

Science department chair Mike Heinz said he admires Grant’s extra effort in bringing scientific experts to the classroom and sponsoring an after-school science club.

“I just can’t keep up with his ideas and creativity,” he said.

According to a Community High School District 99 news release, Grant graduated from Downers Grove North in 1998 and started college as a pre-med student. However, he was drawn to education after volunteering with the Indianapolis Public Schools and working with science celebrity Bob Lewis.

Grant returned to his alma mater as a teacher in 2003 and now teaches Advanced Placement biology, anatomy and physiology.

As part of his curriculum, he takes students to a local hospital to view cadavers and invites researchers from the Morton Arboretum to talk to his classes.

Grant’s witty interaction with his students was fully evident during the presentation as he joked he initially thought he was being fired when he entered the classroom for the surprise.

“I walked in the door and saw way too many people in my classroom, and I was a little concerned; ‘Sorry, sir, you are fired now,’” he said playfully.

Grant said he felt honored to even be considered among the other finalists for the award.

“I’m not going to say that I didn’t look up all the other candidates,” he said. “These people are amazing. They’re doing amazing things. How could I even possibly be considered as part of them?”

Grant will join other honorees at an awards ceremony May 20 at the WTTW/Channel 11 Studios in Chicago. The event will be live-streamed and also will air on WTTW at a later date.



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**Rob Johnson, CBS Chicago news anchor, congratulates Downers Grove North teacher Jeff Grant for winning the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching.**

## Downers Grove North science teacher has Golden moment