



Sunny Hill fifth-grade teacher Nancy Kontney learns Tuesday she is one of 10 Golden Apple teaching award recipients. At right is Gloria Harper of the Golden Apple Foundation.

## Carpentersville teacher named one of state's best

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Cookies, candy and ice cream -- not fruit -- usually have a way of producing total jubilation in kids.

But Tuesday it was an apple that had the students at Sunny Hill School in Carpentersville cheering at the top of their lungs.

This wasn't just any apple, however. It was a Golden Apple, and it was for fifth-grade teacher Nancy Kontney.

She's one of just 10 fourth- through eighth-grade instructors in Illinois to earn the prestigious teaching award.

Gloria Harper, chief program officer for the Golden Apple Foundation, said as soon as you walk into Kontney's classroom, it's obvious she's a special teacher.

"Nancy reaches out to all her children," Harper said. "She makes sure they are all successful."

Harper, along with Kontney's husband Chris, Barrington Area Unit District 220 Superintendent Tom Leonard, school board President Brian Battle and a host of

others, surprised the fifth-grade teacher with the award during one of her classes Tuesday afternoon.

As soon as Harper walked in with a basket filled with apples, the entire class began cheering, clapping and congratulating Kontney.

She said the award should be shared with the entire school.

"This isn't just my moment. This is our moment," she told her students.

Kontney has been a teacher in the Barrington area for more than 26 years.

She spent four years at St. Anne School and then 22 years at Grove School before coming to Sunny Hill last fall.

Grove Principal Cindy Kalogeropoulos said that after watching Kontney teach for more than two decades, it's clear how much she loves her students.

"She is willing to go the extra mile to work on (the social-emotional) part of their life as well as the academic part," Kalogeropoulos said. "Kids really know how much she loves them."

Whether it is making a phone call to check on her students' homework progress or inviting her class to her home for a picnic, Kontney said she tries hard to make sure her students know they have her support.

"It is a lot of bonding," Kontney said of the activities she does with the kids outside the classroom.

She hoped that winning the award was as exciting for Sunny Hill students as it is for her.

"I feel so good for the kids," she said. "I wanted them to have something to hang onto and remember."

Leonard said he is thrilled for Kontney.

"She is obviously very, very special," he said. "She is someone we are going to celebrate."

For earning the award, Kontney will receive a personal computer from IBM, \$3,000 and membership into the Golden Apple Academy of Educators, which now includes 220 teachers. She also gets a paid semester sabbatical at Northwestern University, where winners can take as many courses as they wish in any subjects they choose.

Kontney, along with the other winners, will be honored at an award ceremony in September.

More than 850 teachers were nominated for the award, which has been given since 1986.

For more information on the Golden Apple Foundation and list of other winners, visit [goldenapple.org](http://goldenapple.org).