

# WinnetkaTalk

## (Golden) Apple goes to Sunset Ridge teacher

### News of her award was music to her ears

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Carol Broos, a music teacher at Sunset Ridge School in Northfield, was one of 10 teachers -- out of more than 850 nominees -- in the Chicago area to win a Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching.



*Sunset Ridge music teacher, Carol Broos (left) hugs kindergarten teacher Barb Golomb Wednesday after being told she is one of this year's "Golden Apple Award" winners. (Brian O'Mahoney/Staff Photographer)*

"I'm just stunned," she said when she was surprised with the award, complete with a bag of apples, in her classroom May 7. "The music person can't talk."

She has been with the district for 20 years.

Broos is known for her approach to teaching music, which embraces technology and performance. Her classroom is lined with computers, recording equipment and detailed instructions with computer-speak that would probably confuse any music-loving adult.

She encourages her fourth- through seventh-graders to produce what interests them, whether it be podcasts or synthesized music.

Broos, of Deerfield, is a pioneer of tech-savvy music teaching. She completely remodeled her classroom in 2004 after learning at a conference about innovative ways to engage students with music.

At that point, Broos did away with the standard model of kids with their noses jammed in music books, learning only the differences between brass and woodwind instruments.

"I used to do just singing and recorders, but it all changed overnight," she said.

Her hands-on approach also encourages performances. Broos recently completed a school-wide musical, which included multiple casts.

Broos is Sunset Ridge District 29's second Golden Apple winner since the awards were first presented in 1986.

She was also the only teacher on the North Shore to win the recognition this year.

The Golden Apple Award, considered among the top Chicago-area honors in education, recognizes excellence in teaching. Winners receive \$3,000, a personal computer, a free spring-term sabbatical at Northwestern University, and membership in the Golden Apple Academy of Educators.

The academy has inducted 220 members since it began.

The rigorous nomination process involves peer and principal interviews, and a selection committee observes the finalists in their element.

The winners are not informed until they are presented the award in the classroom.

According to the foundation, Broos was picked because of her creative teaching style, which personalizes the experience for the children.

The winners will be honored at an awards ceremony Sept. 6 in Chicago.

Superintendent Linda Vieth said she was thrilled to have a local Golden Apple winner, and she was impressed with what Broos has done with the music program.

"It's not what you'd expect to learn in music class," she said.

The class, Vieth said, adds new dimensions to music instruction, and it's very popular with the kids.

Derek Hawley, a sixth-grader, can vouch for that.

"Mrs. Broos rocks," he said. "If I could just say one sentence, it would be that. Mrs. Broos rocks."

The 12-year-old said he and his classmates look forward to the class. It appeals to most kids because its wide array of musical opportunities has something for everyone.

"There are so many different music and technology methods to choose from," he said. "Anyone can find something they like."