

Golden Apple nomination 'humbling'

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Louise White Elementary School teacher Pamela Ciway was nominated for a Golden Apple Award for Excellence. (H. Rick Bamman - [hbamman@kcchronicle](mailto:hbamman@kcchronicle.com))

BATAVIA – Pamela Ciway was Maggie Lesk’s favorite teacher when she attended Louise White Elementary School.

“She made learning fun,” the now 20-year-old Lesk said. “I had a hard time with spelling, and she helped me. She would go over stuff with me.”

On Wednesday, Lesk was in Ciway’s third-grade classroom helping teach the class. She is a student at Waubensee Community College studying to become a teacher.

“I want to become a teacher because of her,” Lesk said. “She is the best teacher I ever had.”

The accolades keep coming for Ciway, who is one of 30 finalists for this year’s Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching. Ciway is the only teacher in central Kane County who is a finalist for the award. Sandra Bennett, who is a first-grade teacher at Liberty Elementary School in Carpentersville, also is a finalist.

The 10 Golden Apple Award winners will be announced in May. Each of the 10 Golden Apple Award winners will receive a tuition-free spring-term sabbatical at Northwestern

University, along with a personal computer, \$3,000 and membership in Golden Apple Academy.

The Awards selection committee is comprised of Chicago-area educators. Two committee members will observe each of the 30 finalists in the classroom and interview their principal and selected colleagues, parents and students.

Sherry Whyte, principal at Louise White School, has known Ciway for 11 years.

“She believes every child will succeed, and she will make it happen,” Whyte said.

Ciway doesn’t have to raise her voice in class, Whyte said.

“I think it is because the children know she cares about each one of them,” Whyte said.

Ciway’s philosophy of teaching is to treat each child as an individual.

“If you don’t know your students, you lose a lot of teaching opportunities for them,” Ciway said.

Being a finalist for the award is a high honor for Ciway, who has taught at Louise White for 13 years,

“It is humbling when you see the quality out there,” Ciway said.

Her current students also had high praise for Ciway.

“She tells me what I am doing wrong and she helps me get it right,” third-grade student Megan Snell said. “She helped me with my division.”

Ciway doesn’t take all the credit for the honor of being a finalist for the award.

“It is a team effort,” Ciway said. “I’m just a piece of the whole puzzle.”

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