

GOLDEN APPLE AWARDS

## She's got the music in her

### Teacher's tech touch makes melodies approachable

By Tara Malone, Tribune reporter

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Carol Broos didn't have much luck with school plays. Her tall height worked against her when vying for roles in middle school.

Now a music teacher who also handles drama productions at Northfield's Sunset Ridge School, Broos vowed to cast every child. This week she is staging five productions of a play with five different casts to ensure all 147 interested students—nearly half of the school—get a taste of the limelight.

Such dedication earned Broos a spotlight of her own Wednesday when the music teacher was named one of the top educators in the Chicago area. She became the second teacher to receive a Golden Apple Award in Sunset Ridge School District 29.

"I'm just stunned. . . . I'm at a loss for words, which doesn't happen often," Broos, 52, joked.

On Wednesday, social studies teacher Dan Morvaji also received the teaching distinction at Lake Zurich Middle School North. Morvaji and Broos joined teachers from Chicago, Carpentersville and Plainfield, who were recognized Tuesday.

Morvaji's lesson about the lore surrounding medieval coats of arms was interrupted by Golden Apple officials and Lake Zurich administrators. They said he energized classes with a hands-on, visual style, including a homemade video about Egyptian history starring Morvaji in a rented pharaoh costume. He produces a year-end video for each student to recap the eras they studied and historic plays staged in class.

"I see the importance of reading and writing, but so much today is video and the

immediacy of media. They are used to that and it really plays into how their brain works.," said Morvaji, 36.

Award winners receive a tuition-free sabbatical at Northwestern University, a personal computer from IBM and \$3,000, among other prizes.

Nearly three dozen educators and community members surprised Broos in the music lab she envisioned two years ago. Students there worked on computers with headsets as they experimented with music-themed blogs and podcasts, mixed music for their self-designed Web sites or played the piano.

Such mingling of technology and music is a hallmark of Broos' style, designed to put music in every child's reach.

"If a student has a passion for an activity, I try to involve them in that activity," Broos said.

Jack Foley, 12 and a 6th-grader, said Broos encouraged him to pinpoint his interests.

"Singing is not my thing. So, in this class, I had three partners and we made a sports Web site for our project, but we created music to go with it," Foley said.

"If you just want to try something new, she lets you explore it. It's pretty cool," added 5th-grader Robby Hauldren, 11.

Broos began teaching at Sunset Ridge School two decades ago. Golden Apple officials said teachers and parents nominated Broos for the award. Officials observed her classes and interviewed colleagues, students and students' parents before selecting her from a pool of 850 teachers.

"In Carol's room, there's a music door for every child to open. They may not play an instrument or sing, but there's music for everybody," said parent Elena Saclarides of Northfield.

A Deerfield native, Broos studied music education at Ohio State University. She earned a master's in arts and music education from Northeastern Illinois University.

Morvaji graduated from Crystal Lake South High School in 1989. He earned an associate's degree from McHenry County College and then studied history at Northern Illinois University. He holds a master's in education from Concordia University in River Forest.

