

## Local teachers surprised by Golden Apple Awards

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*A pumped-up David Sobel, a Hunting Ridge physical education teacher in Palatine, is thrilled Tuesday to be awarded the Golden Apple prize by Gloria Harper, left, of the Golden Apple Foundation in Chicago.*

MARK WELSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



*P.E. teacher David Sobel of Hunting Ridge School in Palatine is congratulated by students and colleagues Tuesday after winning the Golden Apple Award for teaching excellence.*

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*Members of the band Bucket Number 6 performed at Hunting Ridge School in Palatine Tuesday when P.E. teacher David Sobel was given the Golden Apple Award.*

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*Bucket Number 6 band member Chris Wade, left, celebrates with David Sobel after the Hunting Ridge P.E. teacher won the Golden Apple Award Tuesday.*

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*Michelle Mangold, who teaches at Dryden Elementary in Arlington Heights, learns Tuesday that she's won the prestigious Golden Apple award. Golden Apple Fellows John and Barb Figlewicz of Palatine share the happy news.*

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*Teacher Michelle Mangold of Dryden School tears up after learning Tuesday she's won the Golden Apple teaching award.*

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*Friends, family and colleagues congratulate Dryden teacher Michelle Mangold after she was surprised with the honor in her Arlington Heights classroom.*

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They've known for a while they were among only 30 finalists, but two Northwest suburban elementary school teachers were stunned Tuesday by the surprise announcement that they were both Golden Apple Award winners.

The recipients of the prestigious teaching award were David Sobel, physical education teacher at Hunting Ridge School in Palatine, and Michelle Mangold, who teaches English proficiency to multilingual students at Dryden Elementary School in Arlington Heights.

Sobel, all the students at Hunting Ridge and even several faculty members were surprised when an assembly that was purported to be for Palatine's new mayor, Jim Schwantz, turned into the announcement of Sobel's win.

Though Schwantz was actually meant to be there at one point, he was called to jury duty - a secret kept from Sobel even while he waited expectantly in a gym filled with excited students.

But when Gloria Harper of the Golden Apple Foundation, entered the room, Sobel's face reflected the stunned realization that the whole assembly was for him.

"I don't feel like I'm here right now," he confessed to the microphone he thought was for the new mayor. "This is such a surprise!"

Meg Pyterek, a Golden Apple fellow and previous winner of the award, was one of the people assigned to monitor Sobel during the review process. She said it was his overall humanity that made him stand out.

"He makes learning fun for students, but he meets all the standards as well," she said. "He gives the students such a sense of joy."

And the students were not shy in showing their universal glee for their beloved teacher. Parent Chris Wade and members of his rock band, Bucket Number 6,

performed a number of uplifting songs like "What I Like About You" in celebration of the moment.

Just an hour earlier, Mangold was equally surprised by the announcement of her Golden Apple Award.

Her creative teaching methods were touted as a large reason for her win, including her use of the iPod to help students break through the English barrier by the use of song.

Mangold, whom the PTA named Educator of the Year just last week, said she was struck uncharacteristically speechless by this honor.

One of her students, Hanaka Vanherik, 8, spoke in praise of the learning environment her teacher creates, saying, "She is a challenge to her kids."

Another nearby recipient named Tuesday was Peter Schreurs, a first-grade teacher at Sprague School in Lincolnshire.

This is the 24th year in which the Golden Apple Awards have been given to 10 top teachers in the Chicago region. Each year, the grade level focus of the award rotates, with this year honoring prekindergarten through third-grade teachers.

Each winner receives a tuition-free spring-term sabbatical at Northwestern University, a personal computer, \$3,000 and membership in the Golden Apple Academy.

All 10 of this year's winners will be honored at a ceremony in September that will broadcast as a one-hour special on WTTW/Channel 11.

This year there were 972 teachers nominated for the Golden Apple Award from among Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake and Will counties.