

# LakeZurichCourier

## Stevenson teacher surprised by award

(<http://www.pioneerlocal.com/lincolnshire/news/2285268,lincolnshire-golden-052010-s1.article>)

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By [RONNIE WACHTER](mailto:ronnie.wachter@pioneerlocal.com) [rwachter@pioneerlocal.com](mailto:rwachter@pioneerlocal.com)

Calculus is not the easiest subject to learn -- or to teach -- but Darshan Jain knows how to explain the branch of mathematics.

"It's really the study of how things change," Jain said. "In geometry, a triangle is a triangle. In calculus, we look at something that's moving. We try to model real-world events and study them through calculus.

The Stevenson High School teacher earned the Golden Apple -- one of the state's most coveted awards for educators -- last week.

Jain, a Hawthorn Woods resident, had to take a break during his first-hour pre-calculus honors class May 12.

In the middle of his lesson, Principal Janet Gonzalez walked into his room with a few people he did not know. Jain had learned last fall that an anonymous co-worker had nominated him for the Golden Apple, which the Golden Apple Foundation gives out in May -- but that was not the conclusion to which he jumped.

"I assumed that I was being observed, or that something had gone wrong and they were there for a student," Jain said Friday. "When they did announce it, I was in almost disbelief."

The Golden Apple Foundation honors those it judges to be Illinois' 10 best educators with a considerable prize package: a six-month sabbatical to Northwestern University and \$3,000 in cash.

Jain said he was quite a ways from deciding when he would take his sabbatical.

The Golden Apple is given unexpectedly.

Jain's family, including his wife, Seju; an 8-year-old daughter, Brianna; and 4-year-old son, Eden, walked in seconds after Gonzalez.

"It was a shock," Jain said. "One hundred percent disbelief."

Jain, 38, came to Stevenson in Lincolnshire after a short career in engineering, and has taught a variety of math and computer programming classes. He said that as an engineer, he started seeing mathematics, and the teaching of it as one of the keys to ensuring the success of America's next generation.

"What we do matters," he said. "It really matters to the lives of our students and the future of our country. It gives us a glimpse of what we can do to be a more productive and useful society."

He said what garnered him the attention may have been his tenacity in making his students believe that they can master the confounding discipline.

"I have high expectations of students," Jain said. "I believe they can do a lot more than what they've previously experienced. What appeals to me is working with students and having them see and experience a subject matter that the vast majority of people have struggled with at some point."

Because calculus studies change, Jain explained, "Once we have an understanding of how things are changing, that allows us to predict what could happen in the future," he said.

But Jain had no model for predicting what was about to happen when he saw the principal walk into his class.