

April 27, 2007

Lori Henry is 2007 Spring Lake Park Schools Teacher of the Year

LORI HENRY, A 25-YEAR TEACHING VETERAN, WAS HONORED APRIL 26 AS THE 2007 SPRING LAKE PARK SCHOOLS TEACHER OF THE YEAR.

With her colleagues, mother, and sister watching, Henry accepted the honor in shock. "I just got back from a successful state competition, and now this. It's been a good week," she said.

Henry teaches Family and Consumer Sciences, which includes courses in Foods, Child Development, Interior Design, Housing, Sewing, Consumerism, and Family Life.

She also developed a program that paired high school students with elementary students.

Joan Dauphinee, a teaching colleague, recognizes that the work Henry does is difficult: "She is innovative and has had to be continually flexible in her career to meet the changes the state has made to her program."

Henry is also a 20-year advisor of Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA).

This student group helps young women and men become leaders and address important personal, family, work, and societal issues.

"It was her work with FCCLA that inspired me to nominate her," said Kalli Binkowski, another colleague. "Her car would be there before I showed up for work and would still



Lori Henry (above left) after she received her Teacher of the Year award and (above right) with Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America students Maria Sjodin and Jamie Benjamin who will be representing the high school in the national FCCLA competition.

be there when I left. It was even there on Saturdays!"

"She turned some of the quietest students I've had into gold medalists at speaking competitions," added Binkowski.

Tiffany Kay Lee is one of those students.

"When I met Miss Henry, she saw potential in me, like she does in so many of her students," Lee said. It was from Henry that Lee gained the confidence to not only compete in FCCLA events, but to run for, and win, the election as FCCLA Regional Secretary.

Henry has been so successful in part because she believes in teaching more than just course content.

Cooperative learning, teamwork, social skills, critical thinking skills,

decision-making, responsibility, and respect play an important role in all her classes.

"I give students the opportunity to assess themselves," says Henry. "It's a great way to know that students aren't only learning about the objectives of the course, but they are also learning valuable life-long skills."

Henry's message to other teachers is to always make connections with students.

In spite of financing issues, increasing class sizes, and additional demands for accountability, Henry knows that "It's that personal connection that ignites a learner to strive to do better."

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That philosophy is engraved on the Teacher of the Year trophy presented to Henry by Bill Neiss, the 2006 Teacher of the Year for Spring Lake Park Schools.

Spring Lake Park Teachers United (SLPTU), the School District 16 teachers union, sponsors the Teacher of the Year program and awards ceremony.

The other 2007 nominees were Mary Bacha, Kalli Binkowski, Doug Cox, Mike Crofton, Joan Dauphinee, Stacy Gerding, Wendy Hatchner, Judy Innvaer, Flo Jackson, Sue Kvidera, Matt Meier, Kevin Reif, and Katherine Sylvester.