

Springfield Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence

Amanda Meyer, a teacher at Springfield High School was surprised April 23 with news that she is a recipient of a 2013 WEM Outstanding Educator Award as an Academic Challenge Coach, an honor that is accompanied by a \$15,000 award.

Meyer is one of six educators being honored by the WEM Foundation and Synergy & Leadership Exchange for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student learning. She is one of two recipients of the WEM Foundation's statewide Academic Challenge Coach Award, which recognizes teachers who are exemplary coaches of student teams that participate and compete in academic challenges endorsed by the Minnesota Academic League.

Meyer has been teaching and coaching for 10 years. She currently teaches biology, ecology and anatomy and coaches Envirothon, Junior FIRST LEGO League (FLL), Knowledge Bowl, Science Bowl and Youth Energy Summit (YES).

"Mrs. Meyer's energy and enthusiasm for the academic teams she coaches has been a catalyst for strong participation, growth and excellent results," said Springfield Superintendent Keith Kottke. "Amanda's ability to motivate, inspire and affect her students, our school and the Springfield community is transparent."

Meyer initiated Envirothon, Junior FLL, Science Bowl and the YES teams in Springfield. She also added to the successful Knowledge Bowl program by adding a junior high season to provide younger students the opportunity to be involved in more school activities. These teams have won state and national tournaments and awards, but Meyer is proud of the "quieter" successes such as YES initiative to provide motion detector lighting in the school, a classroom set of laptops, a greenhouse, solar lighting on a popular community trail in Springfield and the increase of students involved in academic extra-curricular activities.

A former student shared, "Mrs. Meyer's dedication to both teaching and her students excels far beyond the classroom. She is a one of a kind leader who provides limitless opportunities to anyone she is involved with. Overall, she is amazing!"

In addition to her teaching and coaching, Meyer serves as the Springfield National Honor Society advisor and a co-advisor for the prom committee.

Educators are first nominated for the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program by students, parents, colleagues or community members. Those who accept the nomination provide additional information for consideration by Synergy & Leadership Exchange and a blue ribbon selection panel, which reviews and ranks the nominees.

In addition to the *Academic Challenge Coach Award*, other educators are being honored with the *Ethics in Education Award* (exemplary educators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom or school activities, policies or curriculum) and the *Teacher Achievement Award* (exemplary teachers who support, inspire and assist students to attain greater learning as evidenced by student achievement).

In addition to the six statewide honorees, additional educators have been selected as regional honorees for 2013. These names will be announced in June.

Synergy & Leadership Exchange (Synergy) is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering collaboration to advance the development of ethical citizens, providing educational resources, and celebrating achievement and best practices in Minnesota schools, businesses and communities.

For more information on the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program and Synergy & Leadership Exchange, visit: www.synergyexchange.org.



Pictured are (l-r): Sue Gorecki and Shelly Maes, SW/WC Service Cooperative and Amanda Meyer and her family.