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ARCHDIOCESE NAMES GUERIN PREP TEACHER HEART OF SCHOOL AWARD WINNER

Katie Shea, social science teacher at Guerin College Preparatory High School, was among 16 elementary and secondary educators and non-administrative professional staff members named by the Archdiocese of Chicago's Office of Catholic Schools as Heart of the School award winners for 2009.

During an awards ceremony March 20, these individuals were recognized for their outstanding, unique and innovative accomplishments in eight categories: The Arts, Behind the Scenes, Catholic School Identity and Mission, Early Childhood (a new category this year), Innovation and Creativity, Leadership, Rising Star and Technology.

Shea was recognized for making outstanding contributions to integrating technology in education.

Shea is actively involved in the school's one-to-one computing program and has served as a member of the tech team ever since the school introduced the laptop program in the fall of 2007.

The use of technology is highly integrated into her lesson plans. Power point presentations and video clips from the Internet are regularly incorporated into her history classes. Additionally, she has developed an interactive Web page for each of her classes containing information about class assignments, tests and other projects. Using blog software, her site enables students to react and respond to current events as well as answer questions posed for discussion.

In her AP European History class, the blog is used to post movie reviews of movies class members can watch after school for extra credit. Throughout the year, the class has been screening different movies relevant to European history.

In late April Shea is presenting a three-day after-school workshop for any teacher at Guerin Prep who wishes to learn to develop similar Web sites for their classes.

She applied for and received a grant from the Speiser Family Foundation to create a “History Through Art” project for her AP European History class. Using photo editing software on a computer, each student will learn to make a stencil of their favorite historical figure.

Accompanying the finished stenciled painting will be a paper explaining why they chose the figure they did, and why they think this person expresses an important historical moment people should know about. Besides reinforcing historical concepts, Shea believes the project will allow the student to use their computer beyond its basic capabilities as a word processing device and Internet browser.

“We are fortunate to have Katie as part of our faculty. Her knowledge of technology and her passion for social sciences have blended well for our students. She is always on the cutting edge of technology integration. Katie has become a leader within our school and we are very proud that the Archdiocese has chosen to recognize her as well,” said Mrs. Bonnie Brown, principal of Guerin Prep.

The 2009 Heart of the School award-winners were chosen from a potential pool of more than 5,200 educators from 258 Catholic schools in Cook and Lake counties.

Each winner was presented with a commemorative plaque and a monetary award at a breakfast gathering on March 20 at the Windham Hotel in Chicago. The monetary awards were provided by the following sponsors: Catapult Learning, CDW Government, Inc., The Cleaning Company, Inc., Comcast Corporation, Lenovo, Lifetouch National School Studios, McGraw-Hill School Solutions Group K-12, Private School Aid Service, Rowland Reading Foundation, and Zaner-Bloser.

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