**14816, Jan Folchetti**

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am both honored and humbled to be nominated the Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year for the state of Connecticut. This caught me totally by surprise. I never even considered that I might receive this award. When I received my notice I very nearly ran a lap just to celebrate. Then, I remembered that I’m not a kid anymore; I’m the teacher. So, I restrained myself. I remember when I graduated from college and was hired for my first teaching job my mother asked me, “So, what do you do all day, play?” In my naiveté and inexperience I answered, “Yes”. This is the perfect job for someone who doesn’t ever want to grow up.

Teaching in Norwalk has given me the opportunity to grow and evolve as a teacher. My goal and desire is to help my students understand that being active is not just for Phys. Ed. class, but rather, it is a lifetime commitment. The benefits of physical fitness are more than just the obvious physical benefits. Being physically fit also brings self-confidence that carries over into every area of your life. It might also help to add years to your life.

I want to thank my principle for seeing in me the potential to become more than the sum of my education and my experience. He (or she) looked at me and saw more than a young teacher fresh out of college. Mr. (or Ms.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ looked across the desk at me when we interviewed and saw what I would become, not just what I was on that day. That belief in me spurred me on to do my absolute best, to stretch myself to become whatever it was the principal saw in me. I can see now the effects of that confidence in me. I have continued to study and learn whatever techniques and lessons will help me to teach my students. I have worked not just to stay in the same physical condition I was in when I was hired, but I have worked to improve myself as an example to my students.

I also want to thank my family, friends and colleagues for coming tonight and sharing this special occasion with me. I especially want to thank Mac DeVito, my co-worker, who makes coming to work every day a pleasure. Mac makes me laugh; he knows how to get me back on track when I lose focus or things are not going right. I wish he could share this award with me. Last, but not least, I want to thank the CATHPERD committee for selecting me as Middle School Teacher of the Year.

There are others being awarded here tonight so I want to offer my congratulations to them for their awards. Being given an award reminds you that you are not an island. You can’t stand alone when you receive an award and you don’t have to stand alone when you’re going through a trial. I’m grateful for the continued support and encouragement of the leaders of this school system.

Thank you again everyone.