**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”. It is said that if you do what you love you will never work a day in your life. But, I quickly learned that although I loved my job it was not a day at play. It was hard work, but challenging work.

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 brings self-confidence that carries over into every area of your life. When you are fit you are healthy, and good health gives you confidence that allows you to face every situation with a quiet attitude that shows everyone around that you know that you can do the job.

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 looked at me and saw more than a physical education teacher. He saw a whole person, one with life experience, one with a passion to do my job and one with potential for the future. Then, he simply trusted me to do my job and teach my students. He offered advice when he saw a need but never hovered. I have always valued his leadership.

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. Our awards are different but I know each of them worked just as hard as I did to earn their awards. I also know they appreciate their awards just as much as I appreciate mine. It’s gratifying to learn that your hard work is appreciated.

Thank you again everyone.