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D.C. Everest educator named Wisconsin Elementary Teacher of the Year

Pamela Gresser to receive \$3,000 from Herb Kohl Educational Foundation

MADISON — In a surprise ceremony at her school, Pamela Gresser, a fifth-grade teacher at Rothschild Elementary School in the D.C. Everest Area School District, was named Wisconsin's Elementary Teacher of the Year for the 2016-17 school year.

State Superintendent Tony Evers made the announcement during an all-school assembly. As part of the Teacher of the Year honor, Gresser will receive \$3,000 from the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation.

“Wisconsin needs talented individuals to teach in our classrooms and inspire our young people to seek out careers that will fulfill their dreams,” Evers said. “A Teacher of the Year recipient demonstrates an unwavering commitment to students, and it is an honor to recognize educators who do so much for Wisconsin’s public schools.”

“The Teacher of the Year program highlights the many contributions educators make to our children, schools, and communities,” said Herb Kohl, philanthropist and businessman, who co-sponsors the Wisconsin Teacher of the Year program through his educational foundation. “They are leaders who put forth extraordinary effort to help all children achieve.”

Creating an environment where all students, staff, and families experience strong feelings of safety, belonging, and respect is the foundation of Gresser’s classroom. She has served as the building’s Positive Behavior Intervention Support coach for five years, focusing on strengthening bonds between families and the school. She also coordinated schoolwide celebrations, tracked behavioral data, and in doing so, facilitated a significant increase in Parent and Teacher conference attendance. Gresser leads trainings for Love and Logic, and has used Love and Logic to develop collaborative groups and a unique Recovery Process for students. As a result, she was tapped to present at the “Building the Hearts of Successful Schools” statewide conference.

Gresser is also teaching her students to practice mindfulness, which allows students the possibility of developing a variety of peer relationships while making healthy personal growth. She says that her goal is to share with staff how emotions effect our students, teaching practices, and interactions with parents, students, and staff.

(more)

“My personal journey has led me to find a balanced approach to teaching and managing the increasing demands on teachers. True passion and playfulness with students are imperative to bring back much-needed humanity to the classroom.”

Gresser also inspires students and families through her volunteer work in and out of the school. She started a Student Leadership Team at Rothschild Elementary to perform student-led volunteer work in the community, and she partners with Izzy, her certified therapy dog, to visit the Rothschild Public Library to give children in the community who are learning to read the opportunity to read to Izzy. She is a counselor at Camp HOPE, where children and teenagers from throughout the state gather to work through the grieving process after a loved one dies.

Respected by her peers and beloved by parents and children, one student who nominated Gresser for a Kohl Teacher Fellowship called her one of his favorite teachers. “Whenever I needed extra help or was having a bad day, she would take the extra time out of her day to help me out and see if there was anything she could do to make things better.” Another nomination from a parent commended Gresser for “cultivating a setting where classmates are teammates and take care of one another.” New to the district, her son immediately became part of the community.

Gresser received her Bachelor’s in Education from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and earned her Master’s Degree in Education from Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Evers will recognize Gresser as the Wisconsin Elementary Teacher of the Year during his State of Education address Sept. 15 in Madison.

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