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Spring-Ford Area Senior High School Emotional Support Teacher Receives 2013 Voices of Inspiration Award for Teaching Excellence

ROYERSFORD — Helping students overcome daily emotional and behavioral obstacles is one of Aimee Oblak's greatest joys as a Spring-Ford Area Senior High School educator, so it's no wonder she was named a finalist for the 2013 Voices of Inspiration Award for Teaching Excellence.

Oblak, who has worked for the district for 15 years as an emotional support teacher, was one out of 23 teachers selected from a pool of 745 nominations from students, parents, co-workers and administrators throughout Montgomery County. The award was created by the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit and Freedom Credit Union to recognize teachers who clearly demonstrate an extraordinary dedication to teaching young people, while exhibiting the qualities that represent a truly exceptional educator. The finalists were honored during a May 8 ceremony with a plaque and a monetary award. Among the 23 finalists, three grand-prize winners were also chosen from the elementary, middle and high school levels.

"I am absolutely elated to be named a Voices of Inspiration Award for Teaching Excellence finalist and to be recognized with some of the best educators that Montgomery County has to offer," Oblak said. "It is so nice to know that someone thought enough to nominate me for this award, and even more to know that I was selected from an elite group of teachers."

As an emotional support teacher, Oblak performs a variety of responsibilities: her first being that she instructs British literature, American literature, world literature and applied science. Additionally, Oblak develops individualized education plans for students with wide-ranging disabilities, including autism spectrum, bipolar, oppositional defiance and anxiety disorders.

During the 2012-13 school year, Oblak worked with the special education department to develop a hybrid emotional support program at the high school. The initiative allows students to take online courses for part of the day and attend regular classes for the remainder of the school day.

"I have always wanted to work with students with behavioral and mental disabilities. This position has afforded me the opportunity to work with some very unique and wonderful students who have touched my life," Oblak added. "I am truly blessed and believe I have my dream job."

In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Oblak has been involved in many different extra-curricular activities and artistic endeavors at the high school, such as heading up the theater department for the past several years.

"Aimee's innovative mind and ability to work collaboratively with her colleagues have helped to enhance the high school's special education program and are the reason she is a Voices of Inspiration Award for Teaching Excellence finalist," Dr. Jeanmarie Mason, high school special education supervisor, said.

High School Principal Patrick Nugent concurred with Mason, adding that Oblak has the ability to connect with students, allowing them to experience successes that otherwise may be unattainable.

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“Aimee has consistently demonstrated uncanny attributes that very few can replicate. She has also proven to be the ultimate team player by always volunteering to help in any aspect of our day-to-day life in the senior high school,” Nugent explained.

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