



Ms. Donna Godek the Elementary Teacher of the Year is from Holy Cross Academy. Ms. Godek teaches kindergarten and helps each child understand his individual gifts from God. She encourages the students to be Bold in Prayer and rewards students after mass who have examined their consciences and believe that God would agree that their behavior during mass was respectful and worthy of a good behavior sticker. They wear this sticker with pride.

Being a kindergarten teacher presents its challenges when one student is learning letters and another is an emerging reader. Ms. Godek pays close attention to how she can challenge each child to move out of his comfort zone reach new heights of self confidence. Expectations are set for each child individually and celebrated when they are reached. When a student has difficulty, she provides the extra help. When the student is above level, she appropriately challenges the student.

Communication with parents is never ending and often above and beyond expectations. She has met with parents before the school year begins to learn about monitoring medical conditions. She has learned about speech issues, sensory issues, and learning issues so she can work with parents and assist in getting the children's needs met. A parent stated, "In all honesty, the person she has probably helped the most was me. Ms. Godek took a novice parent under her wing and I am a better parent and my faith has never been stronger."

It is not one specific skill that Ms. Godek possesses, but rather it is *everything* that she brings to her job that makes her a superior teacher and invaluable to every single student she teaches as well as each to each of those student's families. Ms. Godek's thorough preparation, unlimited creativity, and endless supply of patience can be summed up by a parent stated, "Ms. Godek is a great teacher who goes above and beyond. He teaching attitude is caring and firm. She incorporates her faith into her lesson plans and the children leave her class with God in their hearts."



Mrs. Patricia Cummins, the Spanish teacher at St. Ambrose School, is the Middle School Teacher of the Year. Sra. Cummins is a woman of strong character and integrity. She considers her job a vocation and holds herself to a high standard.

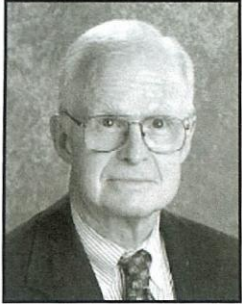
She teaches with great enthusiasm and helps the students want to learn and master the Spanish language. She coordinates grammar instruction with the English teachers so that the students can make the cross-curricular connections. Technology, music and art are all incorporated into the Spanish classes at St. Ambrose School to stimulate interest in culture of Latin American countries.

Sra. Cummins ensures that all students are immersed in the Latin American culture by organizing celebrations of Latin American saints' feast days and cultural holidays with her classes. She coordinates the International Bake Sale which raises funds annually for missions abroad. She works with the PTO to arrange a variety of cultural arts programs for the students.

Sra. Cummins began the foreign language program at St. Ambrose with the 6-8 grades and expanded it to include all grades. She enriches the middle school foreign language instruction with small group instruction in Spanish Literature for native speakers. She enables students to grow by requiring students who excel in Spanish share their expertise with other students.

Sra. Cummins makes time during lunch and before and after school to provide individualized instruction for struggling students. She provides opportunities for the students to develop their multiple intelligences by providing varied opportunities for projects and presentations.

Sra. Cummins not only teaches and cares for her students, she coaches and mentors her fellow teachers as well. She is never too busy to be compassionate with her colleagues. She is calm, thoughtful, and unflappable in the ever-changing school environment.



The high school teacher of the year is **Dr. Michael Potter**. Dr. Potter teaches Biology and Advanced Placement Biology at Paul VI High School. Dr. Potter is a medical doctor who came to education after 26 years in private practice in general surgery. He has instilled in his students a love for God, a direction toward living an ethical life, and the knowledge that all things are possible with God. He challenges students to be the best they can be; to question the world around them, ever mindful of their responsibility as children of God; and to see God in all they do. His goal for each sophomore he teaches is that they “grow in grace and wisdom.”

Dr. Potter does not teach class, he teaches students. He prepares them for the next stage of their lives—college—with study packets, peer review journal articles and positive cooperative learning experiences. A DNA lab brings the science of CSI into the classroom. Realizing that students don’t learn material the same way, he makes sure information is given in different formats. Practical exams are given to those who are hands-on learners. He has designed an online semester science course that blends microbiology, genetics, histology, physiology, and additional hands-on laboratory opportunities for interested students. Students leave his class understanding the ethical distinction between “right or wrong” and “moral or immoral” not because “he said so” but because “he lives it.”

Dr. Potter is always available to assist students before and after school. He is an integral part of the school community chaperoning school dances and sporting events, watching the fine arts performances, and answering the occasional medical questions of staff.



Lorena Dorsey, 4th Grade teacher at St. Theresa School, is recognized for her contribution to students especially when it comes to students who learn differently.

Mrs. Dorsey instills a desire to learn and achieve in all the students. She is creative in her teaching strategies. Mrs. Dorsey asks to change grade levels every 2 to 3 years so she doesn't become stagnant in her teaching—her desire to learn and teach new curriculum and change her lesson plans pays big dividends for her students. Students stay motivated and engaged. If a student excels in a particular area, she has a plan for that student to stretch the student even further. If a student struggles, she works with the parents to create an action plan to meet the student's needs and bring him up to grade level. Students receive individual attention in the classroom, at lunch, and before or after school. Mrs. Dorsey employs exercise, music, art, organizational techniques, and technology as ways to instruct all of her students.

Students know Mrs. Dorsey for organizational skills, Job Day, and bread. Mrs. Dorsey helps students improve their organizational skills by teaching the skills and reinforcing them day after day. She is also known for Job Day. Each student gets his or her own Job Day several times per year to help Mrs. Dorsey and to share something special with the class. The opportunity for public speaking helps boost student's self esteem and build deeper relationships within peers. And the bread. . .students receive freshly baked bread on their birthday.

Mrs. Dorsey is the go-to person when a crisis involving grief arises in the school due to her special training in this area. She has spearheaded the school's anti-bullying curriculum. She also integrated "the Essential 55"—Ron Clark's rules for success in the classroom—into the school.

Mrs. Dorsey knows her students. She helps them develop a love of learning, a deeper knowledge of the Catholic faith and an eagerness to develop their gifts and talents for the service of others. Mrs. Dorsey would tell you she is simply doing what she loves and doing for the children she loves.