

School News & Notes



Tips From The Teacher Of The Year

(NAPSA)—“All students deserve an excellent education.”

That’s the motto of the National Teacher of the Year, Jason Kamras. A teacher since 1996, he has a bachelor’s degree from Princeton and a master’s from Harvard.

The National Teacher of the Year is presented by ING, a global financial institution offering banking, insurance and asset management to more than 60 million private, corporate and institutional clients. The program is a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and is sponsored by Scholastic Inc.

The program focuses public attention on teaching excellence and is the oldest and most prestigious awards program for teachers. A committee of representatives from 14 national education organizations choose the National Teacher of the Year from among the state Teachers of the Year. These are selected on the basis of nominations by students, teachers, principals and school district administrators.

This year’s winner is noted for the unique ways he devised to help his students. For one thing, he got the principal at his middle school to double the instruction time allotted for math so teachers can delve more deeply into each concept. In addition, the school redesigned the curriculum to emphasize the increasing use of technology, meeting all learning styles and putting instruction into a real-world context.



National Teacher of the Year, Jason Kamras, says all students deserve an excellent education.

Kamras also co-founded the EXPOSE Program. It exposes students to the cultural, environmental, governmental and historical riches of the area around their school through a series of carefully selected field trips to the museums, parks, waterways, community service organizations, government agencies and historic sites in the region. At the same time, the students study digital photography and develop autobiographical photo-essays displayed throughout the city, in an effort to expose the larger community to the complexity and richness of the student’s own lives.

“The reward in teaching,” Kamras says, “is the knowledge that I have contributed to the improvement of my community and my nation. My ultimate goal is to engender within my students an intrinsic love for learning that will persist beyond their days in my classroom.

“I also believe firmly that

learning must be relevant to children’s lives. It is important to me that, when my students leave my class at the end of the year, they view mathematics as a powerful tool for understanding, explaining and shaping the world in which they live.”

Kamras adds, there are several steps parents can take to help their own children learn. These can include:

- Encourage a love of learning. Show kids you and other adults learn things all the time, too. Read news items aloud or point out interesting discoveries described in the news. Show how these things relate to schoolwork in history, science and math.
- Show how learning helps every day. Have your children help you add up the register tape from the grocery, adjust measurements in a recipe or figure the tip in a restaurant.
- Hold home poetry readings. Have each member of the family read a poem aloud. Then discuss its meaning and the emotions it evokes.
- Praise your youngsters. Look for situations in which your children do a good job, display a talent or demonstrate a positive character trait. Effort does count.
- Try to provide a time and a quiet, well-lit place to study. Keep it stocked with paper and pencils.

Keep these tips in mind and you may be better able to keep your youngsters on the road to learning.

To learn more, visit www.ccsso.org/ntoy or www.ing.com/us.