

# Chippewa, MISD teachers earn Macomb County recognition

*Two named best overall in county*

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Santilli



Skawski



Hull



Yachcik

CLINTON TOWNSHIP — Local teachers in Chippewa Valley Schools and the Macomb Intermediate School District are being recognized for their hard work.

For the 32nd year, the Macomb County Association of School Administrators and the Macomb Association of Curriculum Administrators have honored elementary, middle and high school teachers. A total of 61 teachers nominated by their respective local districts will be formally recognized during an April 19 event at the MISD building in Clinton Township. Detroit Tigers sportscaster Mario Impemba will be the guest speaker.

The three Chippewa Valley teachers being honored this year are Patricia Santilli, of Erie Elementary School; Elizabeth Skawski, of Wyandot Middle School; and Chris Hull, of Chippewa Valley High School.

“We offer our congratulations to all of these fine educators who have dedicated themselves to making a difference in the world every day,” MISD Superintendent Michael DeVault stated in a press release. “Our teachers in Macomb County provide not only quality learning opportunities, but safe and nurturing environments for all students.”

Santilli, who has taught at Erie for six years, was also named the Macomb County Elementary Teacher of the Year. She called the feeling “incredible.”

“An honor like this is empowering and rejuvenating in a career that is often selfless,” Santilli said.

She didn’t always want to be a teacher, but now she couldn’t imagine her life without being surrounded by curious minds and hopeful spirits. She said she enjoys preparing her students for their bright futures.

“Every day, I strive to be a positive role model and a pillar of perseverance,” she said. “I relish in the opportunity to challenge students to reach beyond their dreams. ... Having a growth mindset is vital in the field of education. In my class, students learn there isn’t an elevator to success; they have to take the stairs. We reflect on learning and behavior, set goals, cross the finish line together, and celebrate every step along the way.”

Amy Yachcik, of MISD’s Glen Peters School, was named the Macomb County high school teacher of the year. Through a center-based program, she teaches special education students who are severely cognitively impaired.

She said it’s amazing to represent the MISD and Glen Peters, where she has taught the past 12 years.

“The students themselves are amazing,” Yachcik said. “And although many times our steps are very small to success ... once they get there, it’s very satisfying for everybody. Just being able to change these kids lives and help them be the best they can be (keeps me motivated).”

Of the important lessons she’s learned throughout her career, she said she teaches her students — which include juniors, seniors and some post-secondary individuals — to not take anything for granted and to prepare for every day to be different. High expectations lead to the best of their abilities.

“Just be happy with who you are and what you’re doing, and the rest will fall into place,” she teaches her students.

Skawski was described as consistently demonstrating commitment and enthusiasm in various ways, and willingly accepting responsibilities out of her routine teaching assignments. Her sense of curiosity was described by school administration as “infectious.”

Along with teaching, Hull coaches three sports and is involved in the community. He makes himself available beyond normal school hours, and he has even been sought by former students and community members who seek fitness or athletic tips. As one student described him, “He has a personality that everyone wants to be around that’s filled with joy and laughter.”