



Jessica Boisclair • Daily Times

FMS English teacher Mary Lou Bettez and the winning author, eighth-grader Adriana Servant.

Girl's essay earns teacher a state award

8th grader's piece recognized English teacher at Feinstein

JESSICA BOISCLAIR

Jboisclair@ricentral.com

COVENTRY— A teacher from the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School was chosen as the winner of the Barnes & Noble My Favorite Teacher Contest after her student's essay was chosen from among 77 other entries.

The Barnes & Noble contest gives middle and high school students the chance to show their appreciation for their teachers. Students who wanted to recognize their teacher were responsible for writing an essay, poem or thank-you letter that explained how the teacher influenced their life.

See *TEACHER*, Page A-2

Teacher lauded by 8th grader

Continued from Page A-1

Seventh and eighth grade English teacher Mary Lou Bettez explained that each year she tries to enroll her students in a different contest; typically it's Letters About Literature.

This year however, she decided to submit her student's essays to the Barnes & Noble competition.

"I feel like when kids write for an audience they ramp up what they normally do," she said.

Bettez said some of her students wrote about teachers that have already passed away, but eighth grader Adriana Servant's essay about Bettez was chosen as the winner.

"There was a lot of stuff I could have written about her so it was easy," said Adriana. "We do stuff like Kung-Fu punctuation. I'm a better writer now that I've been in her class the past two years."

Kung-Fu punctuation, Bettez explained, is a game she uses to help her students learn proper grammar.

"The kids were struggling with punctuation marks and not paying close attention to it so I did a search on how to engage them in punctuation," she said.

In order to play this game, the students must

break up into groups of four and perform Kung-Fu body gestures, which represent certain marks.

"I taught them different moves for each punctuation mark; it's a bodily kinesthetic way to address the punctuation and it helps them with their memory," she added.

Competitions are held during class and the students look at various sentences and try to figure out where the punctuation marks go and which Kung-Fu move to perform to represent that mark.

Bettez was notified by the school that she had won last week and she was more than surprised.

"I'm embarrassed and humbled, she said. "To have a kid recognize you makes you feel so good and the thing is — as I read the letters — to know the kids really do get that teachers care, I cried," she added.

Barnes & Noble will be hosting an event on April 24 to recognize Adriana and her teacher. Adriana will receive a certificate of recognition and both will be honored by the Warwick store.

Bettez will then be entered into the regional competition where five winners will be chosen. Each of the winners will receive a NOOK tablet and \$500 gift card.