

READING 'OTTEN'-T BE A CHORE

Feinstein student wins winter break reading contest

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COVENTRY — Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School student Michael Otten was speechless when his name was recently pulled randomly and he was selected as the winner of an iPod Shuffle, a plaque and a ribbon for his efforts in the Make The Break contest.

English teacher Kathy Delaney is one of the teachers using Achieve3000, a reading intervention program, with great success.

She explained how she has her group of students for three, half-hour blocks, where she provides direct instruction.

"They read different types of articles," she said. "I read the text with them, have them stop and think about what they read then answer questions. We do it together then they do it on their own."

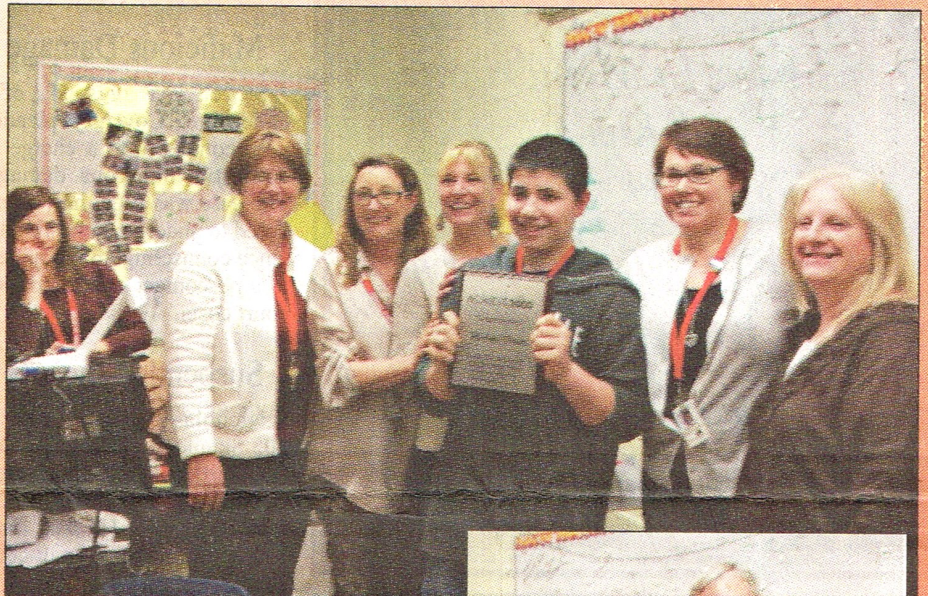
"He has improved so much and I told the class if they all did well, I'd make them breakfast," Delaney said. "I love this program because the kids can see immediate results."

Eighth-grade teacher Heather Raposa asked her class if they wanted to take part in a similar contest called Read to Succeed, which is connected to the Achieve program.

Raposa explained how upon completion of an article, the student takes an online test. To pass, the student needs to provide correct answers to 10 various questions. Read to Succeed was created to address the achievement gap head-on.

By encouraging the crucial activity of reading, the innovative program helps students to keep from falling behind in their quest for learning.

Her students have taken part in this program in the past and when she heard about it

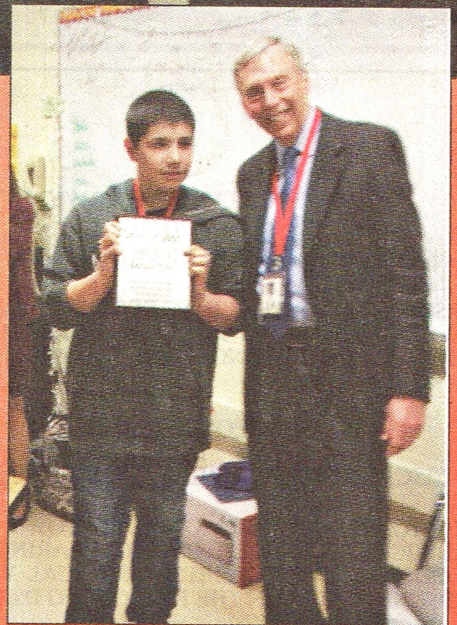


Submitted photos Courtesy Sandy Clunan

Feinstein Middle Schooler Michael Otten was recently presented with a plaque as well as a ribbon for his achievement in the "Make the Break" contest at the school. Oh, he also won an iPod shuffle! In the photo above, he poses for a picture with members of the school's faculty, and at right, he poses with FMS Principal Dr. Arthur Lisi.

last month, they wanted to take part again.

"Between the first and 20th of March, the students had to score 75 percent or above on eight different reading pieces and gained points based on their reading level and accuracy," Raposa said. "They read different articles at their various independent reading levels on line, which was part of their warm-up for their English class."



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Otten sees love of reading pay off in contest

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Raposa thinks the program is great because she can see in real time who is getting the points because it gives her a countdown to show her the number of students hitting the accuracy mark.

Raposa explained how the program allows students to earn Achievement bucks and for every \$20 bucks a student earns, she takes them out to lunch.

“For the last few years, we’ve had pizza parties because so many students hit their mark and beyond,” she said. “When I can see who is still missing from my in-real-time list, they get even more motivated because I want to know who is missing and if they get a question wrong, they have an option to try again. I saw an increase in their self esteem and prior to this, they weren’t really stopping for the accuracy.”

Teacher Sandy Clunan added that the program has the ability to differentiate the text for an individual student but adapt to their ability. Otten, meanwhile, was ready to impart a lesson of his own.

“I feel really happy,” said Otten. “Over Christmas break, I would do Achieve for at least an hour and if I scored less than 100, I would go back and do the same lesson again. I do like to read and I like action books the most. By doing the contest, I learned how to slow down and pace myself more. For anyone, I’d say keep trying your hardest and don’t give up.”
