



Photo by Kendra Lolio

Rhode Island Department of Education Commissioner Ken Wagner hands Tiogue Elementary Preschool Teacher Jesse King her Golden Apple award.

Tiogue's King honored with 'Golden Apple'

Pre-K teacher honored by Department of Education

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COVENTRY — Tiogue Elementary School Pre-K Teacher Jesse King got quite the surprise on Wednesday morning when NBC 10's Patrice Wood and RI Department of Education Commissioner Ken Wagner showed up at her classroom door holding a Golden Apple Award with her name on it. King was nominated by the parent of one of her students, Rosalie Rogers, who felt she deserved recognition for her hard work and dedication to her students. The Golden Apple Award is presented by NBC 10, Hasbro, and RIDE to outstanding teachers throughout the state who make their classrooms creative and safe places to learn.

King was in the middle of a lesson with her integrated preschool students when the surprise was revealed. She said afterward she was most surprised to see her family walking through the door. "I felt so shocked and emotional," King said. "I saw my daughter and I was like 'wait, why aren't you in school?' It's just one of the nicest things anybody could ever do for someone."



Photo by Kendra Lolio

Tiogue Elementary Preschool Teacher Jesse King smiles with her newly-awarded Golden Apple.

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Wagner presented King with her honorary Golden Apple and thanked her for being a fantastic teacher. She also received a \$250 grant from Hasbro provided by the Kids in Need Foundation to help with the purchase of classroom supplies.

"Just seeing how kind and good these kids are is a sign that you are an amazing teacher," said Bobby Gondola, director of Global Philanthropy and Social Impact for Hasbro. "Thank you for what you do."

Teacher of the Year for 2017 Nikos Giannopoulos also congratulated and thanked King.

"School can be a scary place, especially if you have learning difficulties," Giannopoulos said. "And I just want to thank you so much for giving students a safe and comfortable place to express themselves."

Rogers said she felt compelled to nominate King for the award because of the

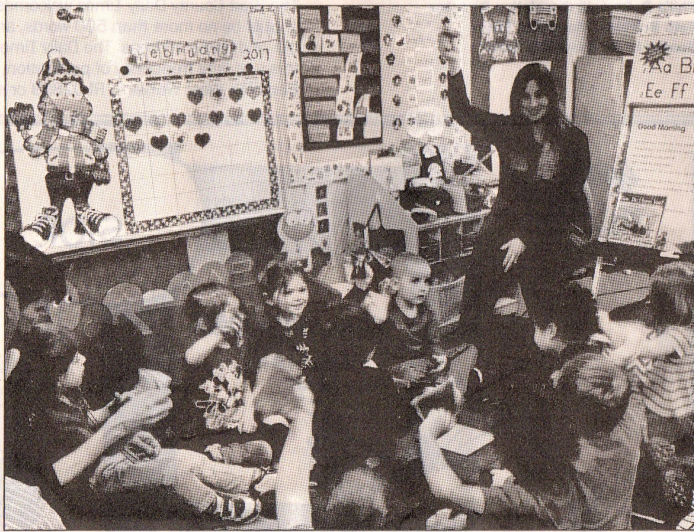


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King and her morning preschool students performed the "Bean Bag Boogie" for guests.

great progress her children have made while working with her. King taught Rogers' oldest child, Kaitlin, for the past three years and

now works with Rogers' son, Lucas. Both children struggled with speech delays upon entering preschool but have made remarkable progress in

the time since.

"Mrs. King is a phenomenal teacher," Rogers said. "My daughter came such a long way from where she

started when she came here. We were told she might not ever be able to talk, and within 6 months of being here she was saying things. She just came right out of her shell."

Rogers said the progress has been just as significant with Lucas.

"Now Lucas is the same way. He came here barely talking and now he's coming out with so many words. It's incredible. He cries when there is a snow day or if he is sick and can't come to school."

King called Lucas "her little love bug" whom she adores working with. She said that as a teacher she is a believer in learning through play and creating close relationships with her students.

"In preschool it's all about play, so you might come in here and see them all acting crazy and running around but they learn so much through doing that," she said. "I also give a lot of hugs and snuggles and I'm very much a nurturer and I believe in that, too. Some of the kids really need the extra love and hugs each day."

Although she's seen other people get the award on television, she never thought she herself would be on the receiving end of such recognition. Pregnant with her second child and due in May, she joked that she was glad she'd opted out of the yoga pants and sneakers she'd originally planned to wear that day.

One of her classroom assistants, Katelyn Smith, said keeping the secret about the award had been the longest 24-hours of her life.

"If they had told me any sooner I definitely would have cracked," Smith joked.

Tiogue Elementary Principal Louise Seitsinger said she could not be more proud of King for the accomplishment.

"Her hard work, dedication, and love of our students is evident everyday," Seitsinger said. "She is such an amazing asset to our preschool program."

NBC 10 News will be airing the footage on March 9.

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