

Coventry educator receives award

Only three others in state recognized

JESSICA SELBY
jselby@ricentral.com

COVENTRY — Everyday Kristen Deschene goes to work and teaches fourth grade science to students at Western Coventry Elementary School.

She said there is nothing groundbreaking about what she does, but clearly, there are those that would beg to differ. Everyone at the school gathered in the gymnasium at Western on Wednesday for what they thought was a Reading Week activity, but it was something much different.

Principal Jan Sullivan told the students and the faculty that the guest reader for the day was Erin Tetreault and that she was there representing a local company.

Tetreault walked into the room and up to the podium at the front of the gym and started to speak about Amgen, the company that she works for, and murmurs crept through the crowd about exactly what was happening.

Then, Deschene's entire family, including her young daughter, Emerson, and her mother, father, sister and others began filtering into the room, and Deschene and everyone else in the room knew something other than a guest reader presentation was happening.



Jessica Selby • Daily Times

Erin Tetreault (from left), Amgen's communications manager, announced last Wednesday at Western Coventry Elementary School, that science teacher Kristen Deschene — joined at the podium by her daughter, Emerson — had earned the Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence.

Cov. science teacher surprised in award ceremony

Continued from Page A-1

Deschene got up from her seat as Tetreault announced that Amgen had named her the 2010 recipient of the Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence. She also informed the audience that she was one of only four Rhode Island teachers and 34 nationwide to be bestowed with this "prestigious honor" and that the honor came with a \$10,000 award.

"The honor recognizes extraordinary teachers who have significantly impacted their students through exemplary science teaching," informa-

tion about the award indicates.

Tetreault said Amgen partnered with the University of Wisconsin Madison School of Education to judge the teaching awards across all sites this year. The judges, she said, read through all of the nomination letters and also reviewed their lesson plans, their methods of teaching and accessed their plans for utilizing grant money.

Sullivan sent in the letter nominating Deschene representing Western. In the letter, Sullivan said Deschene "stands out from the rest" and that as "both an educator and a lifelong learner" she "enhances the lives of her students, col-

leagues and supervisors."

Even the district administration spoke out about Deschene's abilities as a teacher. James H. Erinakes, assistant superintendent for Coventry schools, said the award was well deserved.

"The scores for the state assessments alone show just how well-deserved this award is," Erinakes said. "The scores for the students in this school are always way above any other school in the district and it is clear that she is instrumental in making that happen.

"This is the second award that the school has received in two years and only 34 educators in the country receive this," he said. "It is a testament to the quality of educators we have in this community."

Sullivan indicated in the nomination letter that she sent to Amgen that the 2009 NECAP science scores for the school "reflect that 79 percent of the entire fourth grade met or exceeded the standard in this rigorous state assessment. As a result, we were recognized by the board of regents for this amazing feat. I attribute our success to the hands-on approach that Mrs. Deschene uses as well as her love and quest for continued best

practice."

Deschene has been teaching at Western for nine years. Sullivan said she took over her science classroom when she took the position as principal at the school. She said from that very day she knew that Deschene was "destined to do great things."

Deschene, who was clearly taken back by all of the attention, said she was completely shocked by the recognition. She said she is only capable of doing what she does because of the resources that Sullivan and the school afford her. She said she loves teaching and does what she does because it is a passion for her.

"Ever since I was a little girl I said I either wanted to be an astronaut or a weatherman and being a science teacher is a way for me to

do both," she said. "I can generate my own enthusiasm about science and as a teacher I get to share that with my students."

In addition to presenting Deschene with her award, Tetreault also presented her with two checks, one for \$5,000 that came with an unrestricted use and a second for \$5,000 that was intended for use within the school.

Sullivan said [Deschene] took over her science classroom when she took the position as principal at the school. She said from that very day she knew that Deschene was "destined to do great things."