

# Wininsky in the spotlight

Johannah Wininsky wins dance teacher of the year for Illinois and the midwest

by Hans Schmit

New Trier's Johannah Wininsky won the Dance Teacher of the Year Award from the Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, as well as Midwest Dance Teacher of the year from the Society of Health and Physical Educators.

To win the Midwest SHAPE Dance Teacher of the Year, teachers must be a Certified Adapted Physical Educator, have a minimum five years of teaching experience, and be a state teacher of the year award recipient.

Wininsky said, "I'm very passionate about the art form and believe in the power of dance and how it can change student's lives - I've seen it happen many times."

SHAPE also gives awards for Elementary, Middle School, High School, Adapted physical education, and School Health Education.

Dance Coordinator Chris Rutt has worked with Wininsky for over ten years.

"Johannah Wininsky is an incredible role model. Ethical, compassionate, and extremely generous, Wininsky parlays her



Award-winner Wininsky has been widely praised by her colleagues | NT experiences as a professional dancer, choreographer, and artist into all of her classes at New Trier," said Rutt.

"Her students love her. She cares deeply for her students, and one need only to read some of the personal notes that they write to her to gauge the depth of their admiration and respect," said Rutt.

During the 2018-2019 school year Wininsky will be teaching an early bird class, co-directing Kinesis and Dance Theater New Trier after school as well as teaching Dance lab 2 and 3.

"Our capstone class, [Dance Lab], addresses the art of choreography within a modern-dance-based curriculum. Within that class, she has pushed her students to new heights with projects that challenge them to take creative risks

and work outside their comfort zones," said Rutt.

Wininsky said that her strength as a teacher is the connection she creates with her students both creatively and personally. Working collaboratively with the five other amazing teachers in the dance division is also something that she greatly values.

A highlight of Wininsky and Rutt's dance curriculum is the "Opposite Solo" project, which encourages students to create a movement that is outside their normal range, style, and habits.

Wininsky was honored during the 2018 SHAPE American National Convention and Expo in March in Nashville at the Hall of Fame Banquet.

## Art students travel to "mecca of glass"

Students experience glass-making beyond the classroom

by Danielle Kurensky

Advanced Glass Art students traveled to Washington on a four day educational trip last month.

From Apr. 19 to 22, the 11 glass art students went to Washington along with Glass Art teacher Monique Boyd and Art Department assistant Mike Da Ponte.

The main intention of the trip was to create collaboration between New Trier's glass art students and other glass art students across the country.

The group visited Tacoma and Seattle, cities known for the vast amount of glass in the area. In Boyd's words, "Seattle is a Mecca of glass."

Experiencing the integration of glass art into the cities' cultures provided students with new insight.

"Something that surprised me was there were a lot of glass shops all over Seattle," said senior Katie Barbin.

One of the main purposes of the trip was the opportunity for the students to work with Wilson High School. "Initially, my idea for the trip was to collaborate with another high school because there aren't many schools in the whole country that teach [glass art]. So for our students to have a connection with students in another part of the country, there's all sorts of advantages," said Boyd.

Boyd's excitement to meet others taking glass art was reciprocated by the students.

Senior Milena Srivastava said, "I decided to go on the trip because I thought it would be a cool experience to connect with people who make glass and kids my age that do glass art and to learn more about it."

While working with these students was an integral part of the trip, the itinerary was filled with other



Glass Art worked with other schools, visited museums, and attended workshops opportunities for students to learn more about glass.

"We went to a high school and a junior high school that taught glass and saw their facilities and then we went to the Tacoma Glass Art Museum. They have a hot shop with demos so we got to go behind the scenes and see that. Then we went to Pratt Center for the Arts, a private art facility center with a hot shop, so we actually saw a demo and then the students got to work for a whole afternoon and then we went to see Chihuly," said Boyd.

All of these experiences expanded student's knowledge beyond what they had previously learned in the classroom.

"My favorite part of the trip was going to museums and seeing things made out of glass that I would have never saw anywhere else. I learned a lot more about glass that I never knew," said Barbin.

This is the second year students have visited Seattle.

Last year the students went to Corning, New York. "It was a little different in Corning, they have probably the largest museum in the world of glass historically and contemporary. They have a facility

there that you can make glass, so we took workshops all weekend," said Boyd.

Although glass art is a popular class, the trip is only open to glass art two and three students, a smaller group.

"Our advanced classes are one and a half to two sections of the day and the rest of the classes are beginning classes," Boyd said.

Many of the advanced students had been preparing for this trip all year by selling their work to help pay for the trip.

"We did fundraisers, so students made work all year long and we sold it so that subsidized part and the rest was from the parents," said Boyd.

This effort paid off as students enjoyed the trip. "I would definitely recommend this trip to people next year. Getting to be in Seattle was really fun and getting to do glass art and seeing amazing artwork was really cool," said Srivastava.

Boyd had a hard time coming up with a favorite moment from this trip, "Getting to know students in that kind of setting, I also really enjoyed working with the students in the hot shop and the museums. I really can't pick a favorite."



O'Connor explores perspectives on education on his podcast | NT News

## Teacher nominated for Best New Podcast award

O'Connor explores student-teacher relationships through podcast

by Darcie Kim

English teacher John O'Connor was recently named a finalist by Headline Club for the Best New Podcast award for Schooled, his education-related podcast that gives an insider perspective on the relationship between students and teachers in the classroom.

The Chicago Headline Club is one of the largest Society of Professional Journalists chapters in the nation; the awards recognize Chicago's most prominent journalists and are named after Peter Lisagor, the Chicago Daily News' Washington bureau chief from 1959-1976.

The Chicago Headline Club's 41st Annual Peter Lisagor Awards were held on Friday, May 11 at the Union League Club of Chicago.

Though he didn't win the award, O'Connor was surprised and honored to be named a finalist for it.

"It was really cool and surprising, and made me rethink the whole enterprise."

The idea for this podcast came naturally to O'Connor, an avid podcast listener himself; he's taught for over thirty years and has written a lot about teaching.

When initially talking about this project with his friends and colleagues, he referred to it as the imaginary podcast. It soon manifested into a platform that discussed the "disconnection between scholarship in education, particularly at the university and research level, and the actual lives of schools," said O'Connor.

The podcast has been praised for his warm voice, his tactful questions, and his willingness to listen to his interviewee's responses. On the description page on iTunes for his podcast, a customer review wrote that "His use of music and other aural elements, coupled with excellent editing, make this a pleasure every time. This is one of the best education-related podcasts out there."

The second episode, "Politics in the Classroom," approaches the touchy discussion of the place of politics inside and outside of a class. Elementary education theorist Bill Ayers and teacher at Martin Luther King School Jashen Edwards are

featured in this episode.

Around the time this episode was made, the University of Chicago had sent a letter to incoming students warning them that teachers would not give students trigger warnings.

Additionally, O'Connor said that "right around then, Edwards was attempting to use the song "Amazing Grace" in his classroom in Evanston, but was told that it was too political for young students.

I thought the question "when is something too political?" was really interesting. Isn't that a part of the job of a school, to get students to think about their values and assumptions?"

The fourth episode, Where Have All the Teachers Gone, considers the lack of teachers in today's society and why teachers are choosing to work in different professions.

"The idea for this really grew out of an article I read in Harper's Magazine by Garret Keizer. He had been a teacher and took time off to be a writer, and when he returned to the classroom found that it was impossible to stay as a teacher. It had become too bureaucratic and too standardized. At the same time, I had read an article in an education journal that featured the work of a Michigan State professor and she was studying why teacher resignation letters were going viral," said O'Connor.

The next episode, which came out May 11, is about the idea of neuro-diversity, the belief system that celebrates differences in people.

According to O'Connor, "It's a way of looking at the world where you don't see ADD or dyslexia as problems, but as differences that may be accommodated for in different ways."

It's this genuine and comfortable discussion that has prompted him to become a finalist for the Headline Club's Best New Podcast.

Despite the accomplishment of becoming a finalist, O'Connor's response to his nomination reflects his modest and humble character.

He made sure to emphasize his thankfulness for those around him who support this project.

In O'Connor's words, "I feel really lucky that there is so much talent around, that so many people are interested in these ideas. I wasn't consciously trying to do journalism. We saw it as a way of starting conversations and bringing voices into contact with each other that hadn't previously been talking. But I guess that is journalism."