



Claire Walter from Chicago School Named a Golden Apple Award Finalist
31st Anniversary of the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching

CHICAGO (March 21, 2016) -- Golden Apple, a leading nonprofit committed to celebrating and developing great teachers with the ability and passion to make life-changing differences in the lives of students, proudly announced today that Claire Walter, English Teacher from Wolcott School is one of 30 finalists for the 2016 [Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching](http://goldenapple.org/celebration). The awards recognize and honor outstanding teachers for their role in building a stronger, better-educated society. This year's finalists were selected from a pool of more than 400 nominations, and represent 9th-12th grade teachers throughout Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. For a full lists of finalists, visit goldenapple.org/celebration.

Ms. Walter, a Chicagoland resident, was nominated for her passion and dedication to teaching. She not only exceeds expectations in teaching English, but also enables bright students who have learning difference to approach challenges strategically and with confidence and, most importantly, learn to believe in themselves.

"Claire is simply one of the most extraordinary talented, creative, dedicated, and effective educators I have had the privilege to work with over the course of my career. She is an innovator both with regard to teaching the students in her classroom and creating traditions and values that resonate with the entire school community." said Dr. Miriam Pike, Head of School at Wolcott School.

A Celebration of Excellence in honor of the 30 finalists will be held on Saturday, April 2 at the Hilton Rosemont Chicago O'Hare. Event details and tickets are available at goldenapple.org/celebration. All are welcome to join the Celebration.

The 30 finalists will experience a final round of review and classroom observations prior to the selection and announcement this spring of the 10 award recipients. Golden Apple's award selection committee is comprised of college and university professors, educational consultants, administrators and former Golden Apple Award recipients. Committee members utilize industry and research based professional standards to identify teachers who exemplify the best of the teaching profession. As part of the final selection process, the finalists will be observed in their classrooms and the selection committee will conduct interviews with the teachers' colleagues, supervisors, students and parents.

"Now more than ever, superior teacher quality defines the educational experience children have," said Dominic Belmonte, President and CEO of Golden Apple. "These finalists have evidenced transformative talent in improving students' lives as well as their learning acumen. Golden Apple is proud to pursue its mission of honoring teacher excellence through these candidates."

For over 30 years, Golden Apple has recognized outstanding teachers throughout Illinois each year. Created by founders Mike and Pat Koldyke, Golden Apple's mission is to inspire, develop and support teacher excellence in Illinois. Golden Apple award recipients play a critical role in furthering the programs of Golden Apple, particularly as members of the faculty who help prepare [Golden Apple Scholars](http://goldenapple.org/scholars) of Illinois program participants to be future teachers within schools-of-need.

Each Golden Apple Award recipient receives a tuition-free, spring quarter sabbatical to study at Northwestern University. Each recipient also receives a \$5,000 cash award. Perhaps most importantly, award recipients become Fellows of the Golden Apple Academy of Educators, giving them a stronger voice and a larger stage from which to make a difference in education within Illinois and nationally.

[Nominations](#) for the 2017 Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching will open in mid-April. The 2017 Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching will honor teachers in grades 4-8. Teachers who

are eligible for nomination must be full-time classroom teachers at public or non-public schools within Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry or Will counties. The Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching concentrate on specific grade levels each year.

Golden Apple also announced today the four finalists for the Stanley C. Golder Leadership Award, which honors exceptional Principals and Heads of Schools. Learn more at goldenapple.org/celebration.

About Golden Apple

2016 marks Golden Apple's 31st year of innovating teacher preparation and leadership to transform both the careers of teachers as well as the lives of students in Illinois. Many of our Golden Apple Award recipients choose to give back by participating as instructors, academic coaches, and mentors in both our aspiring teachers program (i.e., "The Golden Apple Scholars") and our professional development program (i.e., "The Golden Apple STEM Institute").

Our focus is on advancing educational excellence for Illinois' most under-served students. Scholars are recruited from the communities in which they return to serve - with a passion for teaching and a drive to create positive change for young people in their communities. We enhance their college education with exemplary advanced teacher preparation, game-changing resources and lifelong support, and, in turn, stay in teaching for five or more years.

Golden Apple is comprised of recognized superior educators, including Golden Apple Award recipients and finalists, leading a passionate team of devoted staff with technical and program expertise, as well as a connected and committed board of directors charged with overseeing our strategic vision. Visit <http://www.goldenapple.org> for more information.

Media contact:
Eileen Rochford
312-953-3305
eileenr@theharbingergroup.com

About Wolcott School

Wolcott School is Chicago's independent college-prep high school for students with learning differences. Located in Chicago's West Town neighborhood, Wolcott's students, faculty, and staff are dedicated to a strength-based curriculum and dynamic student-life culture. Wolcott's expert team of educators, and innovative and responsive teaching methods are the keys to students' success.

In partnership with the University of Chicago Outlier Research & Evaluation team, Wolcott School has been awarded a significant grant from the National Science Foundation. The team's winning proposal, EBP: Bringing AP Computer Science Principles to Students with Learning Disabilities and/or ADHD: The Hidden Underrepresented Group, is a two-year study that aims to expand participation in computer science by ensuring that students with 'learning differences' (students with learning disabilities and/or an Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)) can successfully participate in computer science courses in general, and AP Computer Science Principles (CSP) courses in particular.

It is an exciting time for Wolcott School as we are preparing to build a new Arts and Athletics Center just a few blocks from our main campus. This new facility will allow Wolcott to further support our vibrant interscholastic sports, music, and theatre program. Construction will be complete September 2017.

Wolcott School is now accepting 9th, 10th and 11th grade applications for the 2016-2017 school year. Interested students are encouraged to visit www.wolcottschool.org. Wolcott School is hosting tours by appointment. If you are interested in attending or for additional information, please contact Rachel Spiro, Director of Admissions, at rspiro@wolcottschool.org.