

SPARTAN SPIRIT AWARD REPORT 2020

Every year The GBN Parent Association awards a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating senior called the E.J. Duffy Spartan Spirit Award. Teachers nominate seniors who they feel are “unsung heroes” i.e., students who work hard, and are involved but may not be recognized by other scholarships or awards. The Spartan Spirit Award Committee consists of 8-10 parents who choose the recipient from the nominations submitted by teachers. The Award is presented at the Senior Awards Assembly in May. The nominees are invited to a breakfast or lunch before the Assembly where they learn they have been nominated.

Committee Members

The Committee Chairs recruited volunteers for the Committee via a SignUpGenius form. The Committee members should be members of the GBN Parent Association and cannot be parents of seniors. It's beneficial but not necessary for the Committee to be made of parents whose children participate in different activities at Glenbrook North to bring different perspectives to the discussion.

Nomination Process

In April, Robin Pehlke, the principal's administrative assistant, distributed a nominee selection form to the teachers. She also planned the luncheon for the student nominees and the staff that nominated them. Dana Millman, Dr. Tarjan's Executive Assistant, collected the forms at the end of April, removed all references to gender and identity of the students and created a packet for the Committee. We gave Robin and Dana \$50 Amazon gift cards as a thank you.

Selection Meeting Process

Dr. Tarjan facilitates the meeting and chooses the meeting date, usually an evening the first week in May. The Committee Chairs initially spoke via phone with Dr. Tarjan on May 4, 2020 to discuss how we would handle things virtually as opposed to in person. The whole Committee then met on May 6, 2020 at 7pm via Zoom. If meeting in person, it's held in the Green and Gold Conference room behind the SAC and Dr. Tarjan supplies pens, notepaper, snacks and drinks. Normally, Committee members first get the nominations at the meeting but we delivered them ahead of time so that they had read them beforehand. The meeting usually lasts 1 1/2 - 3 hours depending on the number of nominees. It is stressed to the Committee members that all information at the meeting is confidential!

To start the meeting, Dr. Tarjan spoke about the Spartan Spirit Award in detail and answered any questions. The Committee then voted on their top 4 – 6 picks. In past years there were 12-18 students nominated. In 2019 we received 16

nominations for 10 students so students sometimes receive more than one nomination. After the initial vote there was more discussion and voting until a winner was selected. Dr. Tarjan facilitates the meeting, but does not participate in the actual discussions or vote.

Nominee Gifts

The Parents' Association gives each nominated student a token gift chosen and purchased by the Committee Chairs. We purchased Cross pens engraved with the student's initials from Kim Klinghoffer of Green Acre Branding (847- 414-7868, www.greenacrebranding.com). Past gifts have included a GBN key chain and an engraved glass paperweight purchased from Mark Clayson, owner of Image Specialties of Glenview, sales@myawardpros.com Other options are purchasing from a local store such as Target or Best Buy, or using Amazon. Items we also considered were fleece blankets and portable speakers. Our idea was to choose something the students would actually use as they went off to college.

We let the Committee know that all of the nominees will receive a gift and recognition from the teacher nominating them at the lunch. Additionally, the winner's name is added to the Spartan Spirit Award plaque hanging in the Green and Gold Conference room.

Breakfast/Lunch and Senior Awards Assembly

Usually, the nominees are invited to a breakfast/lunch where they receive their gifts. It's hosted by Dr. Tarjan and attended by the teachers who nominated them. This is followed by the Senior Awards Assembly where the winner is presented with their check by one or both of the Committee Chairs.

This year, the school handled distribution of the gifts and award check since there was no in-person breakfast/lunch or assembly.

Other Notes

It is very hard to choose just one award winner. This award is hopefully given to an "unsung hero" who is probably not going to win any other awards but there have been years where the recipient has won multiple awards. Much of the decision is dependent on how well and in depth the nominations are written. In 2016, the Parents' Association began providing a rubric to help the teachers write their nominations more uniformly. Going forward, we recommend a word maximum for the nominations so that all students stand on equal footing – maybe 300 words?

Timeline of Co-Chair Duties

Early Spring:

This date is pretty flexible. Distribute a SignUpGenius form to the GBN Parents' Association membership (via the person in charge of membership) to recruit Committee members. We opened 15 slots and ended up with 7 people including the 2 co-chairs. This may have been because when we sent the sign up out, we didn't yet have the exact date of the meeting, we only knew it would be the first week in May. Plus, people may not have wanted to commit to something so far in the future. On the positive side, having a smaller committee really helps move the selection process along.

Late February-Early March:

Contact Dana Millman in Dr. Tarjan's office to set the date for the meeting. As mentioned, it is usually held the first week of May on a mutually agreeable date for the chairs and Dr. Tarjan. His schedule tends to be busy that time of year so you may need to work around his availability. Then notify the Committee members the time and place of the meeting.

Ask the Parents' Association president or treasurer what the budget for the nominee gifts is. Decide on the nominee gift and contact vendors to get pricing if necessary. This is tricky because we have a set amount budgeted for the gifts but no way of knowing how many nominations there will be until the week before they're given. In recent years, there have been 12-18 nominees.

Day after the meeting:

Request the number of nominees and the name of the winner from Dana Millman/Dr. Tarjan. Complete the purchase of the nominee gifts. Fill out a check request for \$1,000 for the winner and submit to the Treasurer of the Parents' Association. Facilitate distribution of the nominee gifts if necessary. If held in person, attend the breakfast/lunch prior to the Senior Awards Assembly and distribute the nominee gifts, and the Senior Awards Assembly to present the check to the winner.

Drop off gifts at GBN for Robin and Dana.