



GLENBROOK
NORTH
PARENTS'
ASSOCIATION

SPARTAN SPIRIT AWARD REPORT

Every year, the GBN Parents' Association awards a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating senior. This is called the E.J. Duffy Spartan Spirit Award. A committee (the Spartan Spirit Award Selection Committee) of approximately 15 parents (who need to be members of the GBN Parents' Association and not have children who are graduating seniors) chooses the recipient from a group of teacher-nominated students. The winner's scholarship award is presented at the senior awards ceremony in May. The nominees are invited to a breakfast or lunch a week or two before the assembly where they learn they have been nominated.

Teachers nominate seniors who they feel work hard, and are involved but may not be recognized by other scholarships or awards. It is the Parents' Association's hope that the recipients are "unsung heroes" of the school. This could be a student who participates in plays/music but is always in the background. They may be on sports teams but are not the superstars or captains. It could also include students who work hard academically but are not recognized with top grades or scholarships.

The P.A. chairman recruits volunteers for the committee to choose the award recipient sometime in the spring (we did it through Sign-Up Genius). It is beneficial for the committee to be made of parents whose children participate in different activities at Glenbrook North. For example, it is ideal to have parents whose children participate in things such as band, theatre, the arts, sports, debate and other activities. This helps bring different perspectives to the discussion of who should receive the award. Some of the people who sign up to be on the committee are unable to attend the meeting where the recipient is chosen, so it is best to have 16-18 volunteers. Again, it is also important to note that parents of seniors cannot serve on the committee.

The committee meets once in the spring, usually the first week of May, to go through the written nominations. Dr. Tarjan chooses the meeting date and the chairs convey the information to the committee. The meeting lasts approximately two to three hours. The members read the teacher essays and vote on the winning nominee. The identity of the students is kept secret.

In April, Robin Pehlke (the principal's administrative assistant) creates the nominee selection form and sends it to the staff. She will also collect the forms. Robin also plans the luncheon

for the student nominees and the staff that nominated them. The teachers usually have until the end of April to turn in their nominations to Dr. Tarjan's office. Dana Millman (Dr. Tarjan's Executive Assistant) takes the nominations, removes the student names, and creates binders for the committee to read and make their selection. All references to gender and identity of the student are removed. Robin and Dana both receive a nominal gift (\$50 Amazon gift card is what we presented) for their role in the process.

You will contact Dr. Tarjan's office to set dates for 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. The committee chairs then notify all the parent volunteers of where and when the meeting will be held. It will be held in a room at GBN and is usually the Green and Gold Conference room behind the SAC.

The meeting lasts approximately 1.5 - 3 hours depending on the number of nominees. Over the past few years only one meeting was necessary. The members read the teacher essays and vote on the winning nominee. Although no names are mentioned, sometimes parent volunteers may have an idea who the nominee could be. It is stressed to the parent volunteers that all information at the meeting is confidential! The identity of the winner is revealed at the Awards Assembly.

Dr. Tarjan will supply pens, notepaper, snacks and drinks as well as the nominations. At the beginning of the meeting, Dr. Tarjan will advise the volunteers of the definition of the Spartan Spirit Award in detail and answer any questions they may have. The parent volunteers will then read all of the nominations and take notes. After reviewing the nominations, the committee usually votes on their top 4 - 6 picks depending on how many nominees there are. Previous trends have shown 12-18 students nominated. We had 10 students voted on but 16 nominations for those students (some nominees had more than one essay submitted to nominate them) in 2019. After the first vote to narrow the field, the committee discusses the nominees and Dr. Tarjan will answer questions if needed. The picks will be eliminated and the vote taken again until one winner is decided. Dr. Tarjan does help facilitate the meeting, but does not participate in the actual discussions or vote. Eventually, the committee chooses one winner.

All of the students who have been nominated are invited to a breakfast or lunch hosted by Dr. Tarjan where they learn which teacher nominated them. The past few years, the Parents' Association has given all of the nominated students a token gift. Past gifts have included a GBN key chain, an engraved glass paperweight (2018), and a Cross writing instrument (rollerball) with the student's initials (2019).

It is very hard to choose just one award winner. This award is hopefully given to an "unsung hero" who may not win any other awards but there have been years when the recipient has won multiple awards. Much of the choosing of this award is dependent on how well the nominations are written and often how in depth. In 2016, the Parents' Association provided a rubric to help the teachers with writing their nominations so they would be similar in

length and depth of writing. We would also recommend a word maximum for the nominations so that all students nominated stand on equal footing – maybe 300 words?

It is nice to advise the committee that all of the nominees will receive a gift and recognition from the teacher nominating them at the lunch. Additionally, there is a plaque with the names of all winners in the E.J. Duffy Green and Gold Conference room where the award recipient's name will be added.

After the meeting, tell Dr. Tarjan that one of the co-chairs will contact him to get the nominee list. We used Kim Klinghofer of Green Acre Branding (847- 414-7868, www.greenacrebranding.com) to obtain the pens. Mark at sales@myawardpros.com, the owner of Image Specialties of Glenview, has been used in the past (for the glass paperweight). Either should be contacted in early April to advise them that you will need the order for May. (The recognition gift could change from year to year depending on what the co-chairs want to have as gifts and also based on how many nominees there are.) There is a budget for the gifts posted on www.gbnpa.org.

After the winner is selected, request the name from Dr Tarjan and have a \$1,000.00 check made out by the treasurer of the Parents' Association for the recipient. Ideally one or both of the committee chairs should be present at the Awards Assembly to present the award.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Nugent
Laura Callahan
Spartan Spirit Award Co-Chairs 2018-2019