



S E P

## Gray Receives Innovative Science Teaching Award

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Around Town Written by Mary Grainger

2015



Ithaca High School (I.H.S.) Biology teacher Carlan Gray was honored with the 2015 Raymond C. Loehr Innovative Science Teaching Award at the Ithaca City School District (ICSD) Convocation on September 8. Managed by the Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI), the award was presented by Loehr's son Stephen Yale-Loehr and Christine Sanchirico, IPEI's executive director.

The audience of district staff members gave Gray a standing ovation as she walked onto the Kulp Auditorium stage. She accepted the award while giving thanks to three parts of her life as an ICSD educator. A graduate of Cornell with both bachelor's and master's degrees, Gray is appreciative of the impact of the local institutions of higher education on her teaching and continued learning.

"It is very important to me that science education is valued by our district and by organizations like IPEI," she said. Gray also is grateful for the wonderful people with whom she works who share this devotion to science and to student learning.

Gray was nominated for the award by I.H.S. Principal Jason Trumble.

"It is an honor and privilege for me to recommend my colleague for the Loehr award. When I think of Carlan Gray the term 'master educator' comes to mind. Through innovative teaching, reflective and adaptive practice, and an undeniable dedication to her profession; she has an incredible talent to engage students of all backgrounds and abilities," said Trumble. "She inspires our highest achieving and most dedicated AP students and also engages and motivates our struggling learners, as evidenced by the praise and admiration that I have heard from students. Her expectations and high standards encourage success in all of the students, and inspire her colleagues as well."



Jason Trumble, Carlan Gray

Ann Caren, IPEI Board member and Awards Committee chair, expressed that Gray's dedication to her students and her profession resulted in this recognition as well as her leadership in the Science department and across the district. "Her work ethic and obvious love of learning is infectious. She offered curricular and co-curricular leadership when serving as the district STEM coordinator. The new high tunnel greenhouse at I.H.S is a perfect example of what she can accomplish," according to Caren. With a Connecting Classrooms Grant from IPEI to engage in real-world problem- solving, she worked across the science, technology, and special education curriculums. She collaborated with teachers from the several disciplines and their students to masterfully execute the construction of a structure that will benefit the school for years to come.

"As one might expect from her, this project impacts our community on more than one level. Not only do we have a beautiful new greenhouse, but we have a model for interdisciplinary learning that will inform the Ithaca City School District for many years," said Caren.

Loehr's family initiated the teaching award at the time of his 70th birthday in honor of his career as a science educator. It has been presented to ten different teachers from Ithaca's elementary and secondary schools. A second award in his honor is presented each June to a student who excels in environmental science.

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