



AFT New Jersey, AFL-CIO

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New Jersey Teacher of the Year Creates 'Family Atmosphere' in Class

Perth Amboy elementary teacher Lauren Marrocco recognized for 2012-13

EDISON...Collaborating with colleagues and creating a family atmosphere in the classroom have been keys for 2012-13 New Jersey Teacher of the Year Lauren Marrocco, a Perth Amboy elementary school teacher. Each day in her fourth-grade classroom starts with a morning meeting where students interact, shake hands and learn to make eye contact, then share about their home lives to work through any problems. "My goal is to create a safe, secure environment for learning," said Marrocco.

"Having a focus on character building has made a huge impact on how my students relate to me and one another," said Marrocco, who got the idea for morning meeting from a colleague's professor. Marrocco embraced the concept and found it helped build healthy relationships. "Unless you make a personal connection with each and every child in the classroom, the desire to learn won't be as intense because students respond to relationships that are meaningful for them," said Marrocco.

"I love teaching students how to expand their knowledge and become independent learners and problem solvers," said Marrocco, who began teaching at the Edward J. Patten Elementary School in 2003. She taught a sheltered language first grade class for seven years. For the past two years, Marrocco has been teaching fourth grade.

Marrocco currently chairs her School Leadership Committee and Staff Development Committee, as well as participating in the Curriculum and Assessment and Technology Integration Committees.

Over the past summer, Marrocco worked at the Quantum Learning Network as facilitator of Super Camp, teaching reading and life skills to children in grades 6-8. There she learned strategies founded in brain-based research and reports bringing back even more techniques to maximize student engagement and learning to her classroom.

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[PAGE TWO: New Jersey Teacher of the Year Creates 'Family Atmosphere' in Class]

Marrocco was honored as the Perth Amboy Public School District and Middlesex County Teacher of the Year, before being selected by the State Department of Education. She will now be considered for the national Teacher of the Year award, which is announced in Spring 2013. No New Jersey teacher has been selected national Teacher of the Year since the program commenced in 1952.

Marrocco, who resides in East Windsor, has a master in Administration and Supervision from Kean University and is a National Board Certified Teacher.

"We are extremely proud of Lauren being selected New Jersey Teacher of the Year," said Donna M. Chiera, President of both the Perth Amboy Federation-American Federation of Teachers and the statewide American Federation of Teacher New Jersey, which represents 30,000 education workers in Prekindergarten to 12 schools and Higher Education. "Her enthusiasm and concern for students is wonderful and her peers in Perth Amboy and around the state are extremely happy that she is being recognized with this honor."

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