

A family tradition: Carlson follows footsteps of mother, grandfather, is named Golden Apple finalist

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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BETHALTO - Civic Memorial High School 9th and 11th Grade English teacher Jacob Carlson has followed the family tradition in education and had a strong impact with his students.

Carlson's mother, Jenny, and grandfather, Robert, spent their lives in education. Carlson was named this week to the Golden Apple 2019 Excellence In Teaching Award finalist list.

The Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching & Leadership in Illinois has been awarded every year since 1986. Golden Apple has chosen outstanding teachers to receive the prestigious honor. The program is sponsored by the Stanley C. Golder family.

Jacob was extremely excited about being nominated and chosen to be a Golden Apple finalist.

"At school, the students were all excited and shared in the celebration," he said. "I have had faculty members, family and friends reach out to me about the honor. It was very validating and encouraging to receive the award."

Jacob is originally from Salem, IL. His mother teaches seventh-grade language arts. Jacob said he has always wanted to be a teacher like his mother.

"It is sort of the family business," he said. "It often comes up at holidays or when I am back in Salem. My grandpa wants to know the latest of what is going on in schools. I often share stories back and forth with my mother."

Jacob said he loves the CM faculty and administration and said he is proud of what all of them achieve each day in the classroom.

"Lately, I have become very interested in how the different kinds of technology pull students away from their communities," he said. "They often go off into cyberspace. We have a community project initiative the students do. I also want my students to be digital storytellers. I want them to think beyond themselves and across generations."

Jacob said he loves every day in his classroom.

"I have great hope in the next generation," he said. "Looking at the new perspectives the students have they have amazing insights and I have great hope in the next generation and after."

The Golden Apple finalists gather Feb. 23 in Chicago and afterward, judges will visit the finalists' schools before the final decision is announced.

