

Woman of Distinction: Principal Montgomery leads students, faculty, others by example

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
March 12 2015 3:30 PM



Note: This is the first of a series of profiles on this year's YWCA Women of Distinction honorees.

Principal Tiana Montgomery, one of the YWCA Women of Distinction honorees, always tries to lead by example.

She received a touching surprise recently at North Elementary School in the Alton School District when she was recognized in front of the entire school. She has been principal of North since 2007.

She said she was completely surprised with the recognition led by Ellar Duff, Kristie Baumgartner, and Debbie Edelman.

“One of the most touching points of the program was when a student read something she had written about how I inspired her with being polite and always smiling,” Montgomery said. “The girl said she wanted to be just like me when she grows up. I started to get emotional. I want to touch the young minds and hearts.”

Edelman said without question, Montgomery leads by example.

“Her words and actions demonstrate to students, faculty, staff and especially parents that there can be a place in the world without racism and focused on empowering people. That is exactly what schools should be. She strives to continuously improve the culture of North Elementary, taking cues from her students, faculty and staff.”

Montgomery grew up in Alton. She participated in Alton YWCA activities as a youth. She is on the board of directors for the Crisis Food Center and promotes its successful Empty Bowls Project each year.

In the written nomination by Edelman, it says, “Her open door policy at the office has been adopted by her faculty creating an open line of communication between parents and teachers. This accessibility to their child’s teacher is one of the most successful proactive measures for student achievement. Its impact is evident in academic and behavior achievement at North Elementary.”

Montgomery said she always wanted to be a teacher.

“I wanted to be a teacher all the way through elementary school,” she said. “I became a teacher and I really loved it and I knew I aspired to do greater things. I had great people in my corner.”

Montgomery was a 1997 graduate of Alton High School. She said she had excellent teachers and administrators push her to better things through school.

“One of my biggest supporters is my mom,” she said. “My mom was a single parent and without her inspiration, love, support and discipline, I would not have made it as far as I did. I had great people to support me.”