

Continuing family tradition of shaping young minds

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A young Emma Jolly would sit at the table with undivided attention, watching mom work on her lesson plan.

With each day, her interest and admiration grew. Career aspirations were quickly being forged.

"She's been very influential... an awesome mentor," said Emma of her middle school teaching mother. "She's the hardest working person I know and incredible with kids. She puts 110 per cent of her heart into everything and if there's a way to help a student reach their full potential, she's there. She's amazing." Nowadays it's Emma receiving that kind of praise.

"In Grade 6 I was not very motivated or doing as well as I could have and now in Grade 7 my motivation and grades have drastically improved and that is because of Ms. Jolly and

her ways of teaching," said Daniel Burbach of Oakville's Maple Grove Public School.

Added classmate Rory Browne, "Ms. Jolly is a great teacher because she is very caring, always wanting you to be the best you can be. She's very organized and makes our tasks interesting, fun and different for us every day. We really appreciate how much effort she puts in for us so we can have fun and learn."

About to close out the school year, Jolly is struggling to say goodbye.

And the fact that the 27-year-old Halton Hills native has just been named the Halton District School Board's Elementary (Long-Term) Occasional Teacher of the Year isn't making that any easier.

"I was completely shocked... it came right out of the blue," Jolly said of the award, which Maple Grove staff nominated her for and her Grade 7 home-room and Grade 8 arts

class students wholeheartedly supported. "I'm flattered beyond belief."

Vice principal Rosemary Caruso described Jolly as a true team player who has innovation at the forefront of her instruction and planning.

"She's open to trying anything if she feels it will benefit her students."

One example of that recently saw the seventh graders challenged with an 'escape/breakout room' game in order to test their history knowledge. Jolly said it's important to explore different teaching methods to try to "create and foster innovative minds."

Having already worked at six different schools in her relatively short time as a teacher, Jolly said the constant movement definitely keeps her on her toes.

"You can't fall back on anything," said the LTO Teacher of the Year, whose time at Maple Grove marks

her first full-year teaching stint. "You have to develop that rapport with the students all over again."

Of course that hasn't seemed to be a problem for Jolly, whose positive influence at Maple Grove has extended well beyond her lesson plans. She facilitated an art club that provided the backdrop to the school musical Beauty and the Beast, worked on the morning remedial club twice a week, coached the school soccer and volleyball teams and volunteered on overnight student trips to Muskoka and Quebec.

Said Caruso, "Emma also connects regularly with parents/guardians through weekly newsletters, emails and phone calls. She knows that a partnership with families is essential to the success of her students."

As the time to move on draws near, Jolly meets it with a heavy heart.

"The administration, students and other teach-



Emma Jolly/Photo

Emma Jolly proudly displays her Halton Elementary Occasional Teacher of the Year award.

ers have been awesome. It's an amazing place," she said. "To witness the growth in the kids and realize you had a hand to play in that... it's so great."

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