



*Congratulations to the
2010 Teacher of the Year!*

Past Teacher of the Year Award Recipients

Year:	Name:	School:
2005	Warren G. Schmidt	Cuba-Rushford Central School
2006	Tammy Hollenbeck	Westmoreland Road Elementary School
2007	Fehmida Mohammedali	Al-Iman School
2008	Ann Chestnut	St. Mary's School
2009	Gail Carrier	Holy Ghost Lutheran School



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TEACHER OF
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The recipient of the prestigious Teacher of the Year Award from the FASNY Fire Prevention and Life Safety Committee is Susan L.S. Brown from Germantown Central School District.

Mrs. Brown was nominated for this award with a distinguished list of supporting letters and testimonials encompassing her work in the area of fire prevention and life safety education. She has continually promoted creative ways of introducing fire prevention issues into the school and classroom.

Mrs. Brown is a graduate of SUNY Oneonta with a Bachelor's degree, SUNY Albany with a Master's degree in education and SUNY New Paltz with a Master's degree in Administration. She has served as a teacher at Bryant & Stratton School in Albany, Hudson High School in Hudson and former teacher at Germantown Central School in Germantown. Currently she serves the Germantown Central School District as Elementary Principal.

Mrs. Brown began her endeavor to promote fire prevention and life safety in 2005. She became an advocate for fire safety training in the elementary school where she works closely with the Germantown Fire Department. Mrs. Brown has witnessed firsthand how a fire safety plan can assist a quick exit from a burning home. She experienced a severe kitchen fire in her home in 1990. Due to her preplanning for such a disaster, she was able to quickly escape with her three young children to safety.

Mrs. Brown began working in 2005 with the Germantown Fire Department to enhance their National Fire Prevention Week activities conducted in October. A short program had been provided to the students during this period of time each year. Mrs. Brown knew the importance of involving all the students in regards to participating in this program. An extended program was developed and included a presentation put on by the fire department.

In January of 2008 a tragedy occurred that encouraged Mrs. Brown to broaden her work with fire prevention and life safety. A neighboring town experienced the death of a mother and her son in a fire in their home. It was reported that smoke detectors were installed, however the batteries in them were not operable. After hearing of this tragedy, Mrs. Brown reached out to members of the fire department and inquired if they would be willing to participate in a program on smoke detectors. She then spearheaded a committee consisting of members of the school district, fire department and local town officials, with the main focus being on the importance of smoke detectors.

Mrs. Brown sought further assistance in promoting the proper use of smoke detectors, including the assistance from the father whose wife and fifth-grade son perished in the January 2008 fire. He was willing to speak to the students about the loss of his wife and son due to non-functional smoke detectors. Mrs. Brown worked with the other committee members to seek organizations and businesses that would sponsor smoke detectors for the students. They were successful in securing 100 smoke detectors from The Home Depot and an additional 20 donated from the Columbia County Chiefs' Association.

Mrs. Brown has incorporated a classroom activity from the Risk Watch website. This activity encouraged the students to develop a home fire escape plan, checking the number of smoke detectors in their homes and then completing a survey. All students were handed these materials on the day of an assembly. The survey enabled the group to locate any homes that contained only one, or worse yet, zero smoke detectors. This was all performed without invading the family privacy or causing embarrassment of the families.

Beginning March 13th, 2008 a special assembly called "Promoting the Understanding of the Value and Need for Home Smoke Detectors" has become a tradition. Grades Kindergarten through 12th participate annually in the school assembly. The guest speaker has been the local resident whose wife and son perished in a fire at their home. He has reinforced the tragic consequences that were the result of inadequate smoke detectors. Mrs. Brown has also incorporated the fire department to perform demonstrations on "stop, drop and roll," checking for hot doors, discussing the need for a home fire escape route and planning alternate fire escape routes.

Mrs. Brown's actions have definitely made a difference. On December 28th, 2008, a fire call went out to a local residence in Germantown. Upon arriving at the scene, the fire company found the mother and two daughters standing outside away from the home. The father was not at home at this time and credits his family's quick evacuation response to the smoke detectors. He also gives credit to the fact that his family initiated an evacuation plan after his daughters had attended the school assembly hosted by Mrs. Brown.

The Fire Prevention Coordinator of the Germantown Fire Department, Superintendent of Germantown Central School, and Germantown firefighters submitted other accolades that were presented in support of Mrs. Brown. In one description of Mrs. Brown, it was stated, "I have never seen a person who effectively advocates for her students and her community, as does Susan Brown. She is the 'sparkplug' in her school district and she just 'gets things done.'"

There is evidence of a bit of history repeating itself upon the selection of Susan L.S. Brown as Teacher of the Year. Upon discussing the picture and article on display in the Firemen's Home, she noted that apparently she would be accompanying a descendant from her family. Mrs. Brown has a portrait of her great grandfather that has proudly been on display at the Museum for several years now. He was honored for his achievements in the fire service. How appropriate that she seems to have been passed along the same passion in regards to fire prevention and life safety.