



NJDOE News

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State Board Recognizes April Student of the Month

The State Board of Education today recognized Maria Pace, a senior at Millville High School in Cumberland County, as its April student of the month.

Maria, who ranks in the top 7 percent of her class, is a member of the National Honor Society and a two-year varsity lacrosse player. She has been named to the All-County Band for four years in a row. She plays the flute in the school's Symphonic Band and the piccolo in the Marching Band.

She is also a volunteer for several different organizations. She is president of the Key Club, and she has been a "Big Buddy" for children in grades one through three for the last three years.

"Maria is an exceptionally mature, disciplined and concerned young lady," said her guidance counselor, Ellen Greco. "She is a funny, bright and intelligent young woman. Maria takes her commitments quite seriously. For Maria, these are not resume builders, but life responsibilities."

"Maria is precisely the kind of New Jersey student that merits greater recognition," said State Board of Education President Arnold G. Hyndman. "Her story is especially touching, and we hope she will continue to be a good role model for students throughout the state."

Maria has also demonstrated an exceptional ability to take on leadership roles in adverse situations. For instance, when Maria was just 10 years old, the car she and her entire family were in was struck by a drunken driver.

Though all survived, Maria's mother was hospitalized for several months with two shattered legs and told she would never walk again. Maria's father also suffered two broken legs. All of her family members recovered, and Maria's mother now walks with the help of leg braces.

"Maria took on many family responsibilities," Grecco said. "I believe much of Maria's compassion and dedication can probably be traced to those years."

"Whenever we honor a student, we are impressed with maturity, dedication and accomplishments," said Acting Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy. "Even after what Maria witnessed as a 10-year-old, she has gone on to accomplish great things. We are especially honored to recognize her today."

Each month during the school year, the State Board of Education honors a student or group of students from a county in New Jersey to recognize academic excellence. In March, the State Board of Education recognized Nina Camaioni, a junior at Williamstown High School.

For more information, please contact the Department of Education Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.