

## Hinsdale Central Biology teacher recognized for talent

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By John Cox

**Hinsdale Central High School teacher and Darien resident Kathy Gabric has been named biology teacher of the year in Illinois. Gabric just completed her second decade of teaching this year.**

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Hinsdale Suburban Life

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Hinsdale, IL -

Kathy Gabric always loved biology, but swore she would never be a teacher.

After finishing her 20th year at Hinsdale Central High School, she was recognized as biology teacher of the year in Illinois.

Between growing up around a lake, lots of camping and having her mother as a science teacher for three years in high school, Gabric enjoyed biology. While working on her master's degree to become a marine biologist, she liked teaching lab and returned to Illinois to get her teaching certificate as well.

Getting ready for labs before and after school, grading tests and coming up with a variety of class activities, Gabric easily dedicates 60 to 70 hours a week to helping Hinsdale Central students find an appreciation for biology.

“Every day is a new adventure and a part of that comes from the subject and a big part of that comes from the students I have,” she said. “I just hope my students take away an appreciation of the complexity and beauty of how life functions.”

As students study genetic diseases among other topics, Gabric said she tries to make teens understand there is not a quick fix to the health and environmental challenges they may face in their lives. She said what she enjoys most is staying in touch with her students and seeing where they decided to go with their careers.

Gabric’s classroom has far more technology than when she started. She went from not having any computers in her room to 25 portable computers the students can use for labs. From bio engineering to DNA fingerprinting, Gabric said the type of labs they are doing were not even part of her college education.

Outside the classroom, Gabric spends extra time with students who need help. She also has coached the Science Olympiad team, leading them to state competitions for the last seven years. Marilyn Havlik, National Association of Biology Teachers director, said Gabric was chosen based on, among other things, her involvement with the students beyond the classroom, her variety of techniques to involve students and her dedication to biology.

“Her creativity, involvement and dedication to her students and the teachers in her school as well as educators throughout the country led to her selection as the 2008 Outstanding Biology Teacher from Illinois,” Havlik said.

While Gabric is happy to be recognized for her accomplishments, she is most excited about the banquet in Memphis in October where her mother — her mentor — will be by her side.

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