

## Local Teacher Receives Presidential Award

Jim Mamer explains that in his first year of teaching, the county director of curriculum went to each of the “experienced” educators to see if they would be interested in taking a summer seminar in Dayton that would give insight into some new ways of teaching. No one was interested, and “I was the last one they asked,” he jokes. Unsure about what the classes would bring, Mr. Mamer accepted the offer.

The form of teaching that Mr. Mamer was introduced to was a program that has evolved into what is now called the Connected Mathematics Project. That introduction would forever change the way Jim Mamer taught math.

Fifteen years later, Mamer is as enthusiastic about teaching math as he was when he returned from his first class. He continues to receive extensive middle grades mathematics training at Michigan State University, however, instead of solely attending classes, he himself is teaching the curriculum to other educators. “It is tangible and the kids are getting it.” Mamer explains. “They have come so far with this program.”

Last year, Mr. Mamer submitted his 7<sup>th</sup> grade math program, in which he challenged his students to create new juice box configurations for a juice manufacturer. His program earned him a state finalist position for The Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics and grants totaling \$1,700 from the Ohio Department of Education and the National Science Foundation.

Program submissions were then sent to Washington, D.C. where Mr. Mamer was selected for the Presidential Award. He and his wife received an expense-paid trip to the capitol city and a grant for \$7,500 to be applied to improving mathematics at Rockway. Mr. Mamer was honored in a ceremony at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and met with Vice President Richard Cheney on the White House grounds.

Walking into his classroom it is easy to see why Mr. Mamer is so successful with his students. In fact, walking into the room it may take a moment to find the teacher. He moves from each table of students listening, helping, encouraging, and, at the end of the class, it is the students who teach up front on the overhead as he sits amongst them. Simply stated, he believes that his students can achieve, and they do. Exemplifying the motto that runs across his classroom wall, “Be a good person – Give your best effort,” Jim Mamer is teaching something far more important than math equations.

Jim Mamer graduated from Wright State University, is a Springfield native, and is married with two sons.

For more information about Jim Mamer’s math program or to volunteer to be a math tutor, please contact Rockway School at 328-5385.