

May 1, 2019

Dear Cortland Rotary Club,

It is my honor to recommend Ms. Michelle Bassett for the 2019 Cortland Rotary Teacher of the Year for the McGraw Central School District. Michelle has been teaching in our school district for 17 years, and is the epitome of your motto "Service Above Self."

Michelle demonstrates teaching excellence and commitment in the classroom in many ways. One of my favorite things about Michelle is her ability to build relationships so quickly with her students. She knows each and every student so well and ensures that their needs are consistently met. Michelle efficiently differentiates all lessons and plans fun and engaging activities for her students. She works hard to model routines and her classroom runs smoothly, whether students are working independently, in small groups, or moving between centers. She often has numerous service providers, teacher assistants, and aides in her classes and she directs staff in an organized and respectful way. Michelle works collaboratively with grade level teachers to ensure horizontal alignment, and has initiated collaborative work with other grade levels to be more vertically aligned. Michelle has strong communication and is well received by the family members of her students. Michelle's classroom is full of students who feel loved, and who love learn!

Michelle engages in service outside the classroom and encourages her students to do the same. Despite her busy schedule outside of teaching, Michelle joined the Character Education Committee this year to fill an opening and represent our younger grade levels. Michelle brought new energy and ideas to the committee. Due to her suggestions, we will be starting a new character education program next school year. Our faculty members are very excited for this new change, and I feel it will help us revitalize our program! Michelle is a strong advocate for Rett Syndrome awareness and research. She shares information with staff and community members through emails and informational family letters. She talks openly about her experiences with her students, helping them become aware and empathetic at a young age. I love hearing her students ask questions about Rett Syndrome and listening to Michelle's responses. She truly helps her students understand everyone's differences.

Michelle continuously seeks self-improvement to enhance her teaching skills. Michelle attended a multi-day training this past summer to learn about the importance of play for our students. She incorporates much of what she learned into her lessons and activities. Michelle suggested and hopes to initiate a special information night for families to learn more about the importance of play, and to provide suggestions on how to play with our children in a valuable way. Michelle puts everything she has into being the best teacher she can be for her students!

Michelle is a highly respected and devoted teacher. She is the type of teacher that students remember and appreciate throughout their educational careers and beyond. I look up to her as a teacher and have learned so much from her! She is truly deserving of this honor.

Sincerely,

Sarah Leach  
McGraw Elementary Teacher