

Teachers Make a Difference

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Teachers who make a difference

Kelly Barteaux



*NSTU president Shelley Morse presented Kelly Barteaux with her **Teachers Make a Difference** certificate on March 9 at Auburn Drive High School in Dartmouth. **They are shown (l - r) with Auburn's principal Karen Hudson; NSTU rep and math teacher Preman Edwards; NSTU rep and visual art teacher Catherine Thompson; and English teacher Ashton Verge-Ross.***

When you look at Kelly Barteaux's English classroom at Auburn Drive High it's easy to see why she is a *Teachers Make a Difference* award winner. Like an early elementary classroom with centres, Barteaux's classroom has a clothing/prom dress section, a food section and toiletry section. "I was raised to believe that when children come to us we are to take care of them, so I provide prom dresses for students, regular everyday clothes and also feed children every day," she says.

Her student nominator reiterates why she is worthy of the award. "My English teacher cares about me. She checks in with us if it is an off day. She feeds us and never looks for recognition. She gives away prom dresses to students at no charge and has clothing in her room if we need anything. She knows how to teach. She so deserves this award."

In her 25th year of teaching, Barteaux has been nominated for a fourth year in a row through NSTU's *Teachers Make a Difference* program. Her teaching philosophy includes

covering the curriculum and outcomes, but she also knows how important it is to, "Give timely feedback to students and help them in anyway I can to succeed," she comments. "I won't ever give up on a student and know there are lots of occasions where students can't get there because of extenuating circumstances. I try and help out wherever I can."

She began her career teaching ESL in the Czech republic, followed by a year teaching in Canada's North in Big Trout Lake, Northern Ontario. "When I returned to Nova Scotia, I taught at Caledonia Junior High, Prince Arthur Junior High and Prince Andrew—followed by 11 years at Graham Creighton Junior High." Currently an English teacher, in her ninth year at Auburn Drive High School, Barteaux has also taught Law, Core French, Sociology, History, Geography, CLM, Native Studies, and all secondary levels of English and Social Studies.

She was "absolutely floored" when she received a call about the award. "I was aware of this program but was not aware that I had been nominated every year since its inception," she adds.

"It was very flattering to know that someone took the time to write up a nomination for me and that it had been chosen," she says. "I try to make a difference every day that I teach, and most often, those differences do not come from what is being taught. It may be something as simple as feeding a student who hasn't yet eaten today."

Barteaux is thrilled that as part of her award, her school receives \$300 towards the breakfast or library program. "I love that a donation is made to the breakfast program or the library at the recipient's school," she says. "Our breakfast program is putting the money to good use."

Barteaux says it's vital for NSTU members to be recognized. "So many teachers do so much more than just teach," she remarks. "In this day and age, I don't know many who just teach. The teachers I know really care about their students. They feed them; they clothe them. They pay for necessities for students out of their own pockets. They put in so many extra hours for them. I can't think of another profession where these kinds of things happen."

Barteaux says that she, like her colleagues don't do what they do for accolades. "So many teachers do this for their entire careers and are never recognized. It would be wonderful to see more incentive programs for teachers put into place. Even a phone call or an email saying, 'Hey! I see what you are doing for our students. Thanks!' would be appreciated."

She doesn't view her helping students as going above and beyond either. "I see it as everyday regular work. It's what I do— all I know how to do."

This is the fourth year that the NSTU has run the *Teachers Make A Difference* campaign. This year saw 308 nominations representing 227 NSTU members.

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