

Alison Barone awarded Touchdown for Teachers grand prize from Bills and M&T Bank

Local Physical Education Teacher at PS 43 Lovejoy Discovery School Named 2016 M&T Bank Touchdown for Teachers Grand Prize Winner

BUFFALO, N.Y.—The Buffalo Bills and M&T Bank announced and honored the eighth annual M&T Bank Touchdown for Teachers program finalists and winner at a private Draft Party event on April 28, 2016 at the ADPRO Sports Training Center.

The annual M&T Bank Touchdown for Teachers program honors local teachers for their outstanding service to their schools and communities. Honorees are chosen based on their amount of involvement in their school or community, degree of positive impact on their school or community and their demonstrated commitment to education.

Of the more than 200 nominations received, the following teachers were announced as finalists:

- Alison Barone, PS 43 Lovejoy Discovery School, Buffalo, NY
- Thomas Betrus, Marilla Primary, Marilla, NY
- Michelle Layer, Clarence Center Elementary, Clarence Center, NY
- Angela Mest, Olean Intermediate Middle School, Olean, NY
- Michelle Rickicki, Bolivar-Richburg Elementary School, Richburg, NY

The grand prize was awarded to Alison Barone, a physical education teacher at PS 43 Lovejoy Discovery School in Buffalo, NY. She will receive a \$2,000 grant and a classroom appearance by a Bills player.

Barone was nominated for Touchdown for Teachers by fellow colleagues, former students and parents. At PS 43, a public school on Buffalo's East Side, she is revered for her efforts to raise funds to purchase fitness equipment when the city lacked funding. Outside the gymnasium, Barone serves as a member of Girls on the Run (GOTR) Buffalo, an afterschool program teaching young girls life skills, and Blondes vs. Brunettes, an annual powder puff football game that raises awareness and funds for the Alzheimer's Association of WNY.

She was described by her nominators as a model teacher who thrives on making others see the beauty and power to achieving personal success, and a team player who has the leadership of a quarterback and determination of a linebacker.

"We applaud Ms. Barone and the four additional finalists for going the extra mile to support their students, schools and communities," said Jim Jarosz, Group Vice President for Retail Banking in Western New York. "M&T has and 160 year history in this community and a long tradition of being actively involved in the community, and partnering with the Buffalo Bills to recognize exceptional educatorss through Touchdown for Teachers is a rewarding and exciting way we're able to make a difference."

Each of the four remaining finalists received \$500 in grant funds to use towards furthering their impact on their schools and communities.

"The M&T Bank Touchdown for Teachers program continues to be one of the most rewarding programs for the Buffalo Bills" said Erica Muhleman, Vice President of Corporate Partnerships. "Being able to honor well-deserving teachers coincides with the focus that both M&T Bank and the Bills have in recognizing outstanding educators in our area. Congratulations to Alison on her exemplary work in the classroom and community."

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