

## Teacher of the year listens to his students

5.9.06



Janna Stephanie (left) finished high school thanks in part to Joel Stark-Haws, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. Teacher of the Year.

When Janna Stephanie saw the Sam's Club nomination box for teacher of the year she knew just what to do. She nominated Joel Stark-Haws, the teacher who listened to her, who understood the challenges in her life and who helped her graduate from high school.

"I thought he was the most deserving for this award," said Stephanie. "He's a pretty good guy. He finds ways to interact with people."

Stark-Haws was named the Teacher of the Year by the St. Cloud Sam's Club at a May 9 ceremony. He teaches at the Area Learning Center (ALC) Wilson, the St. Cloud alternative school for students in grades seven through 12.

"There's no place I'd rather be," Stark-Haws said.

Stark-Haws received a polo shirt and a \$100 gift card from Sarah Leshuk, business manager, St. Cloud Sam's Club, and Stephanie, who works at Sam's Club. ALC Wilson received \$1,000. Stark-Haws is eligible for the state and national teacher of the year awards sponsored by Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., which has honored more than 22,000 teachers nationwide and donated more than \$15 million to local schools since 1995.

Bruce Mohs, school board vice-chair, delivered a passionate speech saluting Stark-Haws and his fellow teachers on National Teacher Day.

"It is important to come together and spotlight our colleagues," Mohs said. "This spotlight illuminates all of you."

"Who you are and what you do does not go unnoticed," said Mohs.

"He (Stark-Haws) made a difference in an individual's life," said ALC Wilson teacher Tom Raiche.

Also in attendance were Superintendent Bruce Watkins, ALC Wilson teachers and staff, Mark Lindquist, ALC Wilson director, and Jeff Cziok, ALC Wilson assistant director.