

JORELL TURNER, 2019 JAG OUTSTANDING SPECIALIST WINNER, REGION 2

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO WIN A NATIONAL AWARD?

ACCORDING TO JAG TEAM LEAD LORI STAMATOVICH, IT TAKES BEING SOMEONE WHO IS “PATIENT, POSITIVE, HELPFUL, KIND AND EVERYTHING YOU COULD WANT IN A SPECIALIST,” SOMEONE “SPECTACULAR” WHO “HAS DEVELOPED A TERRIFIC RAPPORT WITH HIS SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION” AND ACCEPTS CHANGES THROWN AT HIM “WITH AN ALMOST ZEN-LIKE CALM.”

THAT IS HOW LORI DESCRIBED JAG SPECIALIST JORELL TURNER. AND THESE QUALITIES ARE AMONG THE MANY REASONS THAT JORELL EARNED A NATIONAL 2019 JAG OUTSTANDING SPECIALIST AWARD.

FROM JORELL’S PERSPECTIVE, “IT’S ALL ABOUT THE KIDS AND THE RELATIONSHIP THAT YOU BUILD. KNOWING THAT I’VE MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIFE OF YOUNG PEOPLE ... ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT STUDENTS COMING BACK AND SAYING ‘THANK YOU,’ PULLING YOU ASIDE AND LETTING YOU KNOW YOU’VE HAD A POSITIVE INFLUENCE.”

JORELL SAID HE DIDN’T KNOW HOW REWARDING IT COULD BE TO WORK WITH HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH UNTIL HE BECAME IMMERSSED IN THE JOB. HAVING A SOLID BACKGROUND DIRECTING A TRANSITIONAL LIVING PROGRAM FOR 16- TO 20-YEAR-OLDS AND OBTAINING A MASTER’S DEGREE IN COUNSELING PREPARED HIM WELL FOR THE JAG SPECIALIST POSITION AT SOUTH BEND’S CAREER ACADEMY. THIS STEM-CERTIFIED CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL SEEKS TO REMOVE SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND ACADEMIC BARRIERS SO STUDENTS CAN LEARN AND GROW THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING, A PERFECT MATCH FOR JORELL.

HIGHLIGHTS OF JORELL’S MANY UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS INCLUDE:

- HE HAS BEEN DIRECTLY INFLUENTIAL ON POSITIVE LIFE CHOICES MADE BY HIS STUDENTS.
- HE HAS INSPIRED STUDENTS TO PUSH PAST THEIR OWN PERCEIVED LIMITATIONS, LIKE MOTIVATING ANINTROVERTED STUDENT TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPETE IN A PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION.
- HE HAS FORGED A STRONG PARTNERSHIP WITH A UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME-ASSOCIATED COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER, USING GUEST SPEAKERS AND CREATING BUSINESS PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS.
- HE PROVIDES TRAINING NOT ONLY FOR THE JAG MODEL, BUT FOR LIFE SKILLS, E.G., TEACHING A STUDENT HOW TO IRON A SUIT AFTER A “WARDROBE MALFUNCTION” AT STATE CDC. (LORI NOTES THAT AS A RESULT OF THIS INTERVENTION, THE STUDENT “WAS OOZING CONFIDENCE” AND EARNED SECOND PLACE IN PUBLIC SPEAKING.)

JORELL STATED THAT HE TRIES TO MAKE LEARNING FUN. “EACH STUDENT IS INDIVIDUAL,” HE SAID, REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZING THAT NO TWO ARE THE SAME. LORI SUMMED UP HIS EXPERTISE SUCCINCTLY: “JORELL IS TRULY A MAN WHO GOES ABOVE AND BEYOND IN EVERYTHING HE DOES.”