

AFA's Jason Crean wins national teaching award

By Ofelia Casillas

Teachers from LaGrange and Chicago won the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, given annually to the nation's best pre-college-level science and mathematics teachers, White House officials announced recently.

Jason Crean has taught biology for nine years at Lyons Township High School. He has also taught courses at Chicago area colleges and in the Brookfield Zoo's education department.

President Barack Obama named 103 recipients. The educators will be honored in Washington, D.C., later this year.

Winners are selected by a panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians and educators following an initial selection process at the state level. Each



will receive \$10,000 from the National Science Foundation.

Crean said he enjoys sharing his love of living things. He created a laboratory that includes live animal exhibits and began a partnership with a local zoo in which students participate in volunteer research activities.

Crean said his whole life is enmeshed with biology—at school, at the university and at home.

"I raise exotic birds. I have a lot of reptiles, and I have a green house. I have lots of plants. I am surrounded by life all the time. Keeping those liv-

ing things, keeps me going," Crean said.

He said he hoped the awards encourage teachers to take risks and try new approaches with their students.

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