

# JERIKA SMITH

## GOLDEN APPLE NOMINEE



We are excited to share that **Jerika Smith**, teacher at the Molloy Education Center, was selected as a Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching Finalist. Out of 600 nominated, Jerika advanced to the TOP 30 in the STATE. This prestigious recognition highlights her extraordinary dedication, passion, and impact.

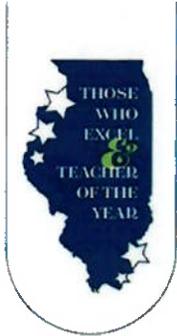
Congratulations, Jerika. We are so proud of you!

**[Click here for the Golden Apple Press Release.](#)**

**[Click here to read the Patch article.](#)**

# LAURA FRISCH

## ISBE THOSE WHO EXCEL



**Laura Frisch**

Niles Township District for  
Special Education #807

**We are home to a 2026  
Those Who Excel &  
Teacher of the Year  
awardee!**



Congratulations to **Art Specialist, Laura Frisch**. She recently received the **Award of Excellence for an Early Career Educator**. She will be celebrated on April 18 at a statewide event which will honor all of those receiving Those Who Excel honors. You make NTDSE shine, Laura!

**BECCA CANASTRA**  
**KESHET GUARDIAN OF HOPE AWARD**  
**RECIPIENT**



Music has always been a powerful part of the Keshet community, and **Becca Canastra** is a big reason why.

As a board-certified music therapist, Becca leads the Keshet Inclusive Choir and brings music therapy to Keshet summer camp, helping participants of all abilities find their voice—on stage and beyond. Her work reflects what Keshet

is all about: showing up, building relationships and creating spaces where everyone belongs.

Keshet is proud to recognize Becca as this year's **Guardian of Hope Award recipient at the 2026 Rainbow Banquet.**

Thank you for spreading your great work out into the community, Becca!

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[www.ntdse.org](http://www.ntdse.org)



March 2, 2026



 **Keshet**  
Forever Growing

GUARDIAN OF HOPE  
AWARD

presented to

**Becca Canastra**

March 8, 2025