

Abby holds a bachelors degree from Morningside College in Physical Education. She has been teaching physical education at Okoboji High School for 17 years. She has been a member of both IAHPERD and SHAPE America for 4 years. During the past 4 years, she decided to become more actively involved in our association and serving all of our members as the School Health Section Chair, Legislative Affairs Chair, and as a member of the Executive Board. Abby stated, "I am ever so grateful for being asked to be a part of such a wonderful organization that has helped me flourish not only professionally but personally." She has attended 4 state conventions and was also a presenter. On a national level, she has attended 3 SHAPE America conventions and 2 SPARK PE Institutes in California and New York. Abby is also a member of the Iowa State Education Association, National Education Association, Special Olympics, and 8 to Great Master Trainer.

In 2009, her school district was awarded a PEP grant that gave her many opportunities to grow and travel. Another significant achievement was the creation of a fitness club challenge called Fitness Fiasco 5 years ago. It takes place in the spring and lasts 7 weeks. Students must form a team that includes 4 students, 1 staff member, and 1 community member. There are a variety of mental/emotional, physical, and social challenges to complete for points. They had a record number of participants last year with 48!

The goal of her physical education program at Okoboji High School was to generate an atmosphere that allows students to learn, create, take risks, collaborate, and be active. Her main emphasis is for all her students to lead an active, healthy, and productive lifestyle much after their time with her is complete. The program focuses on fitness activities, team/dual sports, individual sports, and lifelong activities. Adventure Education is offered to upperclassmen and has exploded in popularity. It includes new and challenging activities such as yoga, disc golf, trap shooting, sailing, fishing, geocaching, downhill skiing, paddle boarding, zumba, zip lining, and parasailing. Students learn to step outside their comfort zone and take risks that they may not do outside the classroom setting. Abby also enjoys bringing in community members or visiting their establishments to make students aware of all the opportunities they have to further their wellness outside the school walls.

Besides the use of music to motivate students, Abby uses other technologies to enrich class time. She has utilized pedometers, stop watches, heart rate monitors, and Facebook. Capturing class videos and posting them to the physical education page on Facebook has motivated students to work hard and have a smile on their face while doing it.

Abby considers fitness an important part of her life. She loves to run, workout, do yoga, bike and swim. She has been known to bring students along to her classes at the YMCA or yoga studio so she can sweat with them and be able to talk about a workout or activity at school the next day.

In her application, she stated "I am a lifelong learner eager to make a positive difference in the lives of my students. I continue to build a physical education program that is one of the top notch programs in the state through networking with others across the state, being innovative in my thinking and creating, and incorporating new activities/games into my program"

Here are a few supporting statements to share, "Abby encourages all students to 'Conceive it, Believe it, and Achieve it' and she lives by this motto as well." "She welcomes her students every day with a compassionate smile and open heart." "Abby is the most innovative physical education teacher I have ever worked with."

Please join me in congratulating our 2016 High School PE Teacher of the Year, Abby Goodlaxson.