



No season
Minnesota's American Legion Baseball season has been canceled.
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Thursday, May 14, 2020

Richfield teacher among top 10 teachers of the year

By **RAYMOND T. RIVARD**
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A Richfield teacher has been selected as a top-10 finalist in the Minnesota Teacher of the Year Award.

But for Richfield STEM School fourth-grade teacher Omar McMillan, that recognition is something he approaches with humility and with his favorite mantra playing in his head: "We Over Me."

Known across Richfield as not only an influential teacher of young students, McMillan is also a successful high school basketball coach. His resourcefulness, continuity and humble approach to both arenas has become legendary around Richfield and are now being recognized across the state.

Though COVID-19 has forced the postponement

of the award's presentation this spring, it hasn't slowed the ever-forward motion of McMillan.

"Being among the 10 finalists—that's an award in itself," McMillan said this past week.

But for the parents who nominated him for the annual award, as well as the multitude of students and families he has come to know and love, he represents everything that's good in education and life.

"If I happen to win, then I use the platform to promote what it took to win—to instill that into other teachers," McMillan said. "I'll still be living in Richfield. I won't be out buying a mansion in Minnetonka."

Reaching the top 10 out of more than 100 nominees took some doing.

After being notified he was among the teachers

nominated for this year's award, McMillan said he was required to answer broad, philosophical questions at the outset—questions designed to help judges narrow the field from 135 down to 50 and finally down to the top 10.

He was one of the 10 teachers selected by an independent panel of 24 leaders in the areas of education, business, government and nonprofits.

"I think the broadness of questions were a challenge—you know you could write a 15-page paper on [the topic]. But, we had to limit it down to a couple of pages, double-spaced," he said about the initial process.

Taking it further

McMillan understood that it was important for

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(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

The emotions between player and coach spill over in this photo of Richfield teacher and coach Omar McMillan and one of his players after a tournament win.

Bloomington still mulling community center's future

By **MIKE HANKS**
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It appeared the end of Creekside Community Center in Bloomington was coming faster than anyone dared to dream six months ago, but the Bloomington City

Council opted for at least two more weeks to think about it.

The council never did discuss the financial ramifications of closing the city's community center, as its prolonged May 4 discussion about closing the Motor Vehicle Office

morphed into a discussion about the process, or lack thereof, of closing the buildings. The council agreed to postpone its decisions on both buildings until the May 18 meeting.

Councilmember Jack Baloga, the most vocal

opponent of voting on either matter during the May 4 meeting, wanted an opportunity to hear public comments on the impacts of closing either city amenity. Both buildings are closed indefinitely due to the coronavirus pandemic, and the

council is considering their permanent closure in an effort to dig the city out of the deep financial hole the pandemic is creating.

The city is estimating that the loss of hotel and entertainment taxes — now, through 2020 and

beyond — will leave its general fund budget approximately \$10 million short this year.

The council discussed the recommendations during an April 27 study session and considered

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