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Student named runner-up journalist of year

Downers Grove North student named Illinois Journalism Education Association runner-up journalist of the year

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Matt Troher, a senior at Downers Grove North High School, has done something that most high school students can't say they ever have.

He has been named runner-up for the 2019 Illinois Journalist of the Year by the Illinois Journalism Education Association (IJEA).

With this nomination, Troher becomes the organization's third to be honored from Downers Grove.

DGN graduate Natalie White was named Illinois Journalist of the Year in 2018 (and national runner-up) and Abigail Murphy was named Illinois Journalist of the Year in 2017.

"To be honest, I can't really put it into words," Troher said. "With the culmination of all the work I have done in the past couple years come to an end, be recognized for my work it's just a huge honor."

The IJEA, which was founded in 1988, works with Illinois scholastic journalism teachers and media advisers to promote high standards in student media and to elevate the status of student media programs in secondary schools across the state.

Each year, IJEA hosts many events that acknowledge the hard work students put in, such as Troher.

The IJEA Fall Conference organized by the College of Media at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the IJEA Yearbook Contest, the IJEA Newspaper & Digital News Media Contest, the Illinois Journalist of the Year Contest, the selection of the IJEA All-State Journalism Team, the honoring of our Journalist of the Year and All-State Journalism Team are all accolades students can obtain and win.

For Troher to be recognized for the award, he and everyone else had to make a portfolio before applying, of all the work he has done in the past.

Writing, multimedia production, editing, etc. were all different sections to be applied for the specific award.

"Each section is scored by the three or four judges on the panel," Troher said. "They tally up the totals, and then whoever has the most at the end is the winner."

Troher's love for the field of Journalism started off at the end of his sophomore year where he never had any plans to pursue the business.

In a Computer Arts class, Troher's teacher asked the class if anyone would want to volunteer for the school newspaper.

"I was intrigued for that and to help out for the state competition newspaper, so I just raised my hand and I volunteered to create info graphics for this competition," Troher said. "After I took second in the state competition for that portion, I met the journalism advisor and then from there I was super interested in it."

Following his revelation, he was then called up his junior year to become the Arts and Entertainment Editor of the paper.

Troher has been on the paper now for his last two years primarily doing investigative news stories, and he has aspirations to major in Journalism at either the University of Illinois, or Indiana University.