

Karyn Wolcott nomination
Faculty/Licensed Staff

For 20 years, Karyn Wolcott has been instrumental in continuing the legacy of success of Willowbrook High School's music department. She has served as the Music Department Head for the last six years and also is the choral director and director of CenterStage, the school's show choir. She teaches Advanced Placement (AP)/college-level Music Theory, Class Piano and Class Guitar and is the sponsor for the Tri-M (Modern Music Masters) Honor Society as well.

"Wolcott has been a tremendous leader and has continued to add to the accomplished history of our music department," said Willowbrook Principal Dr. Daniel Krause. "With her leadership, 16 students have been named as All-State Musicians in the last six years. But what makes Wolcott truly stand out is her commitment to going above and beyond and providing opportunities for our music students to perform at events outside of school. She's constantly seeking out ways for them to gain real-world experiences."

The choirs frequently sing at local venues such as chamber and rotary events and also travel to area assisted living and memory-care facilities to share their music. The musicians also perform every Friday for students in the School Association for Special Education in DuPage County (SASED) room at Willowbrook. Wolcott also helped plan and organize a trip in March 2017, where the Concert Choir toured Toronto. The group performed concerts at Casa Loma, St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica and The Cathedral Church of St. James and also participated in a clinic at University of Toronto.

Beyond sharing their vocal talents, members of Tri-M also give back to the community through participating in service projects and volunteering at Feed Our Starving Children events.

"Society doesn't always view teenagers in a good light," Wolcott said. "We have amazing teenagers at Willowbrook, especially in our music department. I believe that by sharing our music, we can showcase the talent and hard work of these students, as well as bring a little joy to an event or place. Gifts and talents were given to share, and I am always looking for an outlet to provide our musicians with this opportunity."

Under Wolcott's guidance, the Concert Choir also was recently selected to perform at the Illinois Music Education Conference. During that conference, the choir premiered a piece on Jan. 27, 2018, created in memory and honor of former District 88 Board of Education member and Willowbrook alumnus Mark Johnson, who passed away in December 2014 after a battle with cancer. Willowbrook commissioned William V. Malpede to compose the piece, entitled "i thank You God for most this amazing." The text for "i thank You God for most this amazing" is from the poem by E. E. Cummings, which was selected by Johnson's wife and children.

"Mark was always an advocate for the arts and went out of his way to support the students in District 88, so when the Concert Choir achieved the high honor of performing during the

conference, my first thought was this would be a perfect event to honor his life,” Wolcott said. “I hope these experiences instill in our students a lifelong love and passion for music.”