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March 28, 2022

Dear SCTA,

On January 27, 2020 the Sachem Community lost one of our friends and colleagues. Matthew "Dezy" DiStefano may be gone but he has left a legacy that has resonated throughout our community and spread throughout the country. From New York to California, Dezy gear can be seen and worn proudly. His "We Get To" mantra continues to inspire everyone who has heard his story and to remind people to treasure every single day.

During the 2019-2020 school year, the SCTA Officers met and discussed how we can play a role in spreading Dezy's message and also find a way to honor other educators across New York State who dedicate their lives to others. Together we crafted a NYSUT Resolution for the 2020 NYSUT Representative Assembly (RA) urging for the creation of a Humanitarian Award. Unfortunately in March of 2020, the COVID pandemic began and halted our progress of advocating for the creation of this Award. However, since we first introduced this resolution, we never gave up promoting the need for this award. We know that Dezy and other educators have and will continue to help others, but we believe their stories need to be shared and celebrated. With this being said, we are happy to announce that at the 2022 NYSUT Representative Assembly, NYSUT will be announcing the creation of a brand new statewide NYSUT Humanitarian Award. Below is the description and criteria for any New York State Educator to be nominated for this award.

"The NYSUT Humanitarian Award has been established to recognize NYSUT members, past and present, who have exhibited the highest level of dedication to their communities through humanitarian actions and philanthropic work – demonstrating leadership for the greater good in the face of adversity – and who use their professional platform to benefit others over themselves."

The NYSUT Humanitarian award is awarded to a member who:

- 1. Dedicates themselves to help others who have fallen on hard times,*
- 2. Raises money or awareness to support foundations that help people in need or are ill,*
- 3. Actively motivates and inspires others to follow their lead, and*
- 4. Demonstrates courage in the face of adversity.*

The SCTA is incredibly proud that because of our advocacy, this award will now be available to celebrate educators across New York State, and we are extremely honored to announce that Matthew "Dezy" DiStefano will be the first recipient of this NYSUT Humanitarian Award. On April 2, 2022 at the NYSUT RA in Albany, the SCTA NYSUT Delegates will be in attendance to watch a video created by NYSUT celebrating Dezy's story as well as the Award ceremony.

Thank you to everyone for their support in making this award a reality. Remember, "We Get To" make choices that impact others and change their lives for the better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Philip Barbera".

SCTA
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