



# *Teacher of the Year*

**Andy Mattson**

The Oaks sets the bar high for its teachers. Every single one deserves an award for their work, but I'd like to honor one person in particular, who has profoundly impacted me, and probably doesn't even realize it.

To say this teacher loves the Lord would be the understatement of the century. To put it into perspective, I had to get a new Bible after his class because my old one couldn't handle the overwhelming amount of highlighter, margin notes, and page flipping that it underwent every day. But the greatest testament to this teacher's faith is not how many Bible verses he can quote, although it's a lot, but rather, it's the way he leads by example.

He taught me how to imitate Christ's light in his excitement to be at school every day. There's no better wakeup call than being greeted with a big smile and a high five that leaves my hands stinging. Now, the Zip Fizz probably helps, but I know for a fact his enthusiasm is genuine, and The Oaks wouldn't be the same without him. In his own words, he's just a small-school teacher, proven by how he doesn't let the boundaries of the classroom get in the way of his relationship with his students. As far back as eighth grade, he sought me outside of class to offer advice and encouragement, which I desperately needed. I will forever be grateful for the way he specifically encouraged me to step out of my shell and reach out to people. I doubt he even realizes his impact because it is just his personality to call each of his students to fulfill God's role for them.

By now, you probably know who I'm talking about, but if it's still a mystery, then all I have to say is "Let's goooo!" Mr. Mattson, you saw something in me that I didn't see in myself, and now as a senior I think I can finally say I've achieved a small part of your vision. For this and so much more, thank you.

