

Press Clippings 1/5/2018

---Courier News--- 1/5/18

'Inspired Latina' thankful for award

Elgin teacher honored for writing about son's autism

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO



RAFAEL GUERRERO/COURIER-NEWS

Tamika Morales is a second-grade teacher at Channing Elementary School in Elgin. She is one of 26 Latina women who wrote and shared personal stories for the third installment of the "Today's Inspired Latina" book series. Morales wrote about coping with her youngest son being diagnosed with autism.

The first Today's Inspired Latina Woman of the Year Award recognized an Elgin teacher who shared her reflections about coping with her youngest son's autism diagnosis.

The creator of a book series on Latina professionals recognized **School District U46 teacher Tamika Morales**, who was surprised by the award. She said she could not believe she stood out among the other "wonder women" from across the world who shared their tales about growing and succeeding as Latinas.

"We do great things. We're all wonder women," said Morales, 43, who in addition to teaching also writes, acts, ran her own tax franchise and presides over a nonprofit. "We will continue to do great things, powerful things to lead the way."

Morales said the recognition acknowledged that "when you do what you love and you do it wholeheartedly, the world will notice," according to a news release.

Morales authored one chapter in "Today's Inspired Latina, Volume III: Life Stories of Success in the Face of Adversity," the third in a series of books in which Latina women share their views of somewhat taboo topics like death, immigration, breaking vicious cycles, mental illness and entrepreneurship.

The mother of two wrote about her youngest being diagnosed with autism and the struggle she underwent coping with the new chapter in her family.

Morales said it was not easy to talk about her struggles. It took her 19 months to share the basics of her story beyond immediate family, said Morales, who is of Puerto Rican descent. On Thursday, Morales said it still moves her to tears discussing her story, one that she believes is not limited to her.

“As I wrote, it became a healing process,” she said. “I’d research, I would write and it became a defining moment for me. (The topic) became something that either I would let define me or I define it. ... I can’t let these fears get to me, inhibit me. I decided to not let fear become the storyteller.”

It was Morales’ openness and willingness to assist others that had “Today’s Inspired Latina” creator Jacqueline Camacho-Ruiz select her over almost 80 other women who had written for her series.

“There was one person that really stood out to me and that was (Morales),” Camacho-Ruiz said in a written statement. “She was unbelievably connected to her community and very proactive.”

Camacho-Ruiz noted Morales’ involvement in the behind-the-scenes work of the “Volume III” book launch, coordinating the itinerary for a New York trip last year, raising funds from book sales and collecting items for Hurricane Maria relief aid. She also noted Morales’ involvement in autism awareness, such as her role as president of the nonprofit Autism Hero Project.

Camacho-Ruiz’s awards announcement caught Morales off guard last month, she said.

“To find out that it was awarded to me, that I inspired it, it left me speechless, and I’m the type of person who always has something to say,” Morales said.

The Algonquin resident is a second-grade dual-language teacher at **Channing Elementary School**, an actress, a playwright and the founder of the Autism Hero Project, a nonprofit organization that helps families who are affected by autism. Morales also operated her own Liberty Tax Service on Randall Road before selling it, she said.

SPORTS SECTION

---Daily Herald--- 1/5/18

Not pretty, but Geneva escapes Elgin with win

BY JERRY FITZPATRICK



Geneva's Kross Garth keeps possession of the ball despite the defense of Elgin's Trevon Morris Thursday in Elgin.

The Geneva boys basketball team gave host Elgin every opportunity to win Thursday's Upstate Eight River matchup but the Maroons refused to accept the Vikings' generosity.

Geneva held on to win 58-53 despite committing 28 turnovers and missing a pair of super-bonus free throws with a 3-point lead with 12.6 seconds left.

After Nate Santos missed 2 free throws, Elgin's Roy Panthier grabbed the defensive rebound and passed ahead to Matt Turner, who spotted junior Trey Yarber on the right wing.

Yarber had just made a 3-pointer with 13.3 seconds left to draw Elgin within 3 points of the lead. However, his contested 3-point attempt with Santos in his face rattled in and out.

Mitch Mascari grabbed the rebound in the lane, was fouled with 5.3 seconds left and sank both free throws at the other end to allow Geneva (9-5, 2-2) to escape Chesbrough Field House with a victory.

"We should have won by way more than we did," said Mascari, whose game-high 20 points included 8-of-10 fourth-quarter free-throw shooting. "We didn't have our greatest game out there but we finished in the end."

The Vikings committed 15 second-half turnovers.

"We sped them up the whole game and forced them to dribble it off their legs and stuff," said Elgin senior wing John Fortmann, who finished with a team-best 15 points and 3 steals. "The effort was there. We just missed our free throws and that cost us to lose."

Elgin (4-9, 0-5) missed 14 of 17 free-throw attempts. "And 7 layups in the first quarter," Elgin coach Mike Sitter pointed out. "Seven Layups. Usually, the team that plays harder comes out victorious. I thought we really took it to them. We left it all on the court but it was free throws and layups. You're not going to win games if you don't hit the easy ones and those are the easiest ones you get in basketball."

Geneva dominated the rebounding battle 32-18 to somewhat offset its turnovers. The Vikings shot 44 percent from the field (17 of 39) and 36 percent from 3-point range (5 of 14), but first-year coach Scott Hennig didn't like what he saw.

"It wasn't good at all," Hennig said. "Credit Elgin for playing harder. I don't know what's going on. Everyone says were young. We just didn't play well. We didn't shoot the ball well and too many turnovers. Outside of a minute here, a minute there it was not Geneva basketball. I was very disappointed in just being lax with the ball. Silly passes, easy baskets we missed. I wasn't very happy."

Guard Jack McDonald sank 3 of 4 attempts from 3-point range to finish with 11 points for Geneva, which returns to action Tuesday at home against Streamwood.

Xavier Bonds had 11 points and 3 steals and Yarber contributed 9 points for Elgin, which next plays at Batavia on Tuesday.