



MNSHAPE Monthly  
**LOON LINES**  
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 Spotighting Emerging Leaders/Higher Education



MINNESOTA SOCIETY OF HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATORS



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***Moving Forward Together***

Message From the President

*Derec Picha*

Greetings health & physical education community,

I hope that you all are maximizing your remaining time with students before summer break as we reach the conclusion of the 2021-22 school year.



As president of MNSHAPE, I had the opportunity to attend the SHAPE America National Convention for the first time this April. It was a tremendous learning and networking experience for the health and physical education community.



Among my personal highlights of the convention were inspiring keynote addresses from Chris Nikic and Sylvia Crawley. While both speakers had a different backstory and life experiences, the general themes were similar and centered around persevering in pursuit of your dreams or goals. One particular quote from Sylvia Crawley resonated with me, “anytime you’re in pursuit of something great, there will always be great opposition”.

Our convention theme this year ***Moving Forward Together*** stems from the mission of elevating and progressing quality health and physical education for ALL Minnesota students in our schools. Chris Nikic has a philosophy of getting 1% better every day. As educators, together we can apply that same philosophy to our teaching in order to provide the best possible experience for the students and communities we serve.

We at MNSHAPE are looking forward to seeing all of you at our **state convention November 7-8** at Lakeville South High School so we can learn and grow together.

Sincerely,

Derec Picha - President



It's a dream come true and so surreal to say that I am the 2020 Minnesota Health Teacher of the Year, the 2022 Central District Health Teacher of the year, and the 2022 SHAPE America National Health Teacher of the Year. I feel like I'm just any ordinary teacher, but I happen to know my content very well, enjoy writing curriculum a little too much, can't wait to sign up for professional development opportunities, enjoy contributing to my school and community, and I really, truly, care about the success of my students. I'm excited to represent MN while attending/presenting at various conferences/conventions and I look forward to making more connections with other teaching professionals, bettering my teaching practices, and sharing teaching strategies I use in my classroom.

To be named 2022 SHAPE America National Health Teacher of the Year is a great honor! But for me, it also brings about a lot of emotion as it took so much time, effort, challenges, and disappointments to get to where I am today. To say this road has been difficult, is an extreme understatement. You may not know this about me, but I've been cut from two positions, I've subbed for three school years, and I've been frustrated, disappointed, and felt inferior on numerous occasions.

When I took the 2018-2019 school year off from teaching for personal reasons, I struggled with the decision. I prided myself on being a working mom who balanced it all. My husband and I were preparing to welcome our third child to the family, with three kids in daycare. Financially, we would be spending more on childcare than I would take home from teaching. My dad was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer Feb. 2018 and we knew the grim statistics; I wanted to be available for both parents if needed. I did not want to be a stay at home mom, I wanted to be in the classroom teaching my students. In the end, I put my family first and made the decision to take a one year leave which was granted by my school district.

This leave truly changed my teaching philosophy. With everything that happened in that year, including my dad's death, I began to realize the impact on how important high quality relationships are. I challenged myself to cultivate relationships, build relationships, and maintain relationships in a completely different way than I ever had before. This new mindset has made me the teacher that I am today.

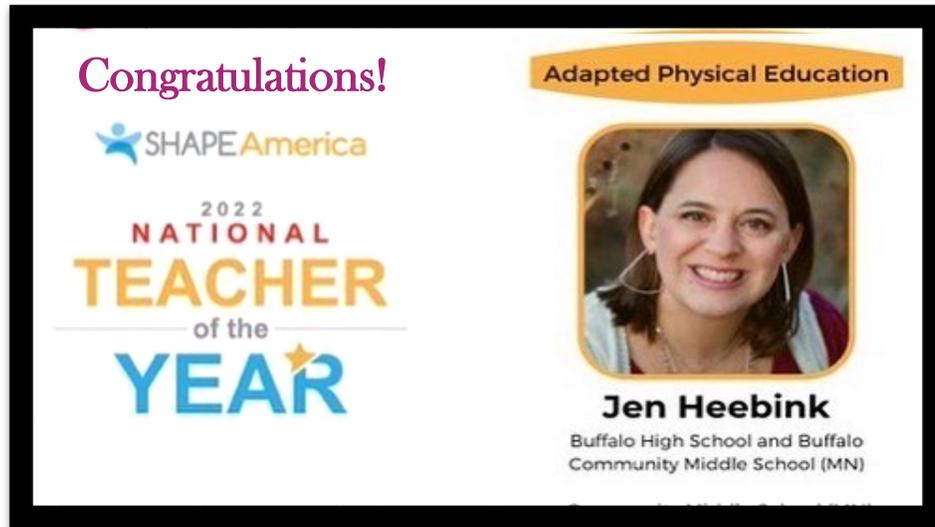


Fast forward to the fall of 2020, when I was named MNSHAPE Health Teacher of the Year. I was honored to be selected for the award and the opportunity opened up new doors and connections for me to become an even better teacher. The application process for the 2022 Central District Health Teacher of the Year challenged my thinking and made me examine my teaching practices. Through this process, I had the opportunity to build stronger relationships with Jen Heebink and Randy Spring, my fellow 2020 MNSHAPE Teacher of the Year award winners.

January-March of 2022 was a blur for me as the National Teacher of the Year application process is comprised of multiple aspects including a 20 minute video about our philosophy and teaching practices along with a unit plan, a written narrative and lesson plan (mine was 11 pages, single spaced), an administrator recommendation, a parent/student recommendation, and a 30 minute interview. In addition, my school district denied my request to attend #SHAPENOLA and after weeks of me advocating for myself, I was finally approved to go.

When in New Orleans, attending my first national convention, I didn't know what to expect. If you have never been to a national convention, I strongly suggest you urging your school district to approve you to go to #SHAPESeattle in March of 2023! Although I was a nervous wreck all week (just ask Deb Van Klei or anyone else who spent more than five minutes talking to me), the relationships, sessions, and networking were top notch! I was able to become a better teacher because of the opportunity. Friday night was the closing session and when Jen Heebink was announced for the 2022 National Adapted Physical Education Teacher of the Year, I couldn't have been more excited for her but I also quickly dropped a four letter word because I thought to myself "there's no way they'll have TWO National Teacher of the Year winners from Minnesota"! I figured that since Jen won, I wouldn't win. Well, you've made it this far reading and you know I won. I don't remember all of my speech but I know that I cried during the whole thing and screwed up my acceptance of the award and photo, but I also made it extremely clear that I am SO PROUD to represent Minnesota!

As I continue my year as 2022 SHAPE America National Health Teacher of the Year, I hope to serve as a mentor to those who want to challenge their teaching practices to become their best. Please, feel free to reach out to me if you want to share/discuss a lesson/activity/unit, have any questions or want to bounce an idea off someone, or simply want to connect. You can DM me via Twitter (@CoachMatheson). I want to elevate Minnesota health and PE teachers by sharing other great things we are doing in our classrooms and communities. Together, through relationships we build, we all learn, grow, and succeed.



I was never planning on going to the National SHAPE America Conference in New Orleans (SHAPE NOLA) and was not even a thought in my mind. All that changed when December 2021 came. I was pushing my clanking cart back to my office in the middle school girls locker room, after my 1st hour class, when I had a new email from SHAPE America in my inbox. As my eyes scanned the email reading its contents, I realized this was the email I was waiting for. The notification that I was the Central District Adapted PE Teacher of the Year for 2022. My walk with my clanking cart turned into a jumping dance that no one got to see because I was all by myself. I started celebrating with my coworkers and colleagues and started to book my trip to NOLA, because now I was up for National Adapted Physical Education Teacher of the Year. And lucky for me, my friend and next school district over neighbor, Jessica Matheson, also won the Health Education Teacher of the Year. We got to do the whole journey together.

I left Minnesota's 30-40 degree wind with snow pellets striking my face and walked off the plane to arrive in NOLA with 80 degrees and sun. I actually clapped my hands because the sun felt SO good. Arriving at the check in at the convention center, I started to slowly meet up with other professionals and MNSHAPE members at the general session. We went out to explore the city for dinner and had authentic southern cuisine. I met up with Cindy Chase, 2020 National Adapted PE Teacher of the Year who had presented virtually at MNDAPE that year; I had talked to her on social media but we had never met in person. It was a JOY to spend the evening talking to her, getting caught up and sharing our teaching experiences. I noticed a theme throughout my SHAPE NOLA experience; Meeting amazing PE, Adapted PE, Health and future professionals. We connected on life, teaching and made each other better in the process as we attended sessions to grow as educators but also growing as friends.



And while this part of the conference was amazing, I have to say my favorite part of the whole experience was meeting the other Adapted PE district teachers of the year. We all received our state awards at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020 when the world shut down and are all still here kicking. After submitting all our applications and having our virtual interviews for the National Teachers of the Year we started a group text to celebrate the fact that we had made it that far and continue to help each other. When we met in person, we all instantly became best friends which was a huge blessing because it often is not like this. Each of the ladies are FANTASTIC people and AMAZING teachers. All of us were cheering each other on. Throughout the week, we went to sessions together, even ate crawfish together and walked Bourbon St. on a Wednesday night with a giant group of PE and Health teachers to experience a whole different culture. It was so good for my soul to be surrounded by “my people” all week.

When the time came for the closing session, we were all a little anxious just to get it over with but enjoying all the keynote speakers. My favorite keynote was Chris Nikic, the first man with Down syndrome to complete in an Ironman, as he shared about his philosophy of “1% Better.” As we sat there awaiting the announcement of the 2022 National Teacher of the Year by Eileen Tirado, I pictured each one of these incredible new BFF ladies up at the microphone giving their speech. Instead Eileen said my name. I was so overwhelmed with gratitude for the whole week and all of the teachers who have impacted my life along with my students along the way. It was an amazing whirlwind of a week and I am so excited to be able to present, speak and encourage other teachers. Four years ago I decided to live bravely in my teaching so I could teach my students to be brave. Pushing to uncomfortable places has made me and my students better human beings. I am super grateful for SHAPE NOLA and all the amazing connections we’ve made.



## Spotlight Article– Higher Education Division

*Vice President Amber Fryklund*

*Vice President-Elect Julie Knutson*



Hello and Happy Spring!

I want to introduce myself - my name is Dr. Amber Fryklund. I serve on the MNSHAPE Board of Directors as the vice president of the higher education division. I am currently an assistant professor at Bemidji State University in the Human Performance, Sport, and Health department. I started my teaching and coaching career in Duluth, Minnesota teaching K-12 physical education and health education while coaching high school girls' hockey, golf, and tennis.

I recently had the chance to attend the SHAPE America Convention in New Orleans. What an amazing experience and opportunity to learn with and from the best in our profession! Everything about the conference was excellent – the volunteers, sessions, topics, speakers, general sessions, social celebrations, networking, and the city of New Orleans!

Here are a few takeaways from my first (in-person) SHAPE America Convention:



- Physical Education and Health Education professionals are truly amazing!
- Formal and informal networking opportunities are abundant.
- Resources – significant resources that you can incorporate into your teaching.
- Social media engagement. At one point during the convention #SHAPENOLA was trending on twitter!
- Meeting new people and collaborating with other professionals.
- Learning new strategies, games, and methods while staying up to date on current trends.
- An Exhibitor Hall with vendors promoting new equipment and technology for teaching.

I encourage you to attend the **2022 MNSHAPE Conference (November 7-8)** [more info](#) and the **2023 SHAPE America Convention in Seattle (March 28 – April 1)** [more info](#). If you are a future professional, I encourage you to seek out **travel grants** from our website [info here](#) or your institution to help you attend one of these conferences.

Lastly, I will leave you with this final thought, **consider making a proposal to one or both of these conferences to showcase and share your amazing work you do in your classroom**. Proposals for MNSHAPE Conference [info here](#) are **due June 1, 2022**.



## Spotlight Article– Emerging Leaders Division

*Vice President Macayla Braun*

*Vice President-Elect Nicollett Gammon-Deering*



Have you ever thought about attending a National SHAPE America Convention but not sure if it's for you?

MNSHAPE Emerging Leaders have put together a list of why they think attending the National SHAPE America Convention is important. At this stage in life, we tend to look to others for inspiration and guidance as we enter our new profession. What better way to learn from and make connections with other amazing professionals than the National SHAPE Convention? By attending the convention, we have gathered life changing information that we can carry with us to our future classrooms. We believe taking time to learn outside of the college classroom is crucial to help us grow as future professionals. Taking advantage of the professional development opportunities presented to us will better us for our future students. Whether you attend the convention as a presenter or just an attendee, there is a place for everyone at the National SHAPE America Convention. As emerging leaders, we think it is never too early to get a start at professional development opportunities and hear directly from professionals in our field. As students attending the convention for our first time, we instantly felt a sense of belonging and were welcomed with open arms by the tight knit community of HPE professionals.

Here are a few takeaways that we have from our first convention:

- It is never too early to start networking and making connections with other professionals around your state and the world. You can learn something new from everyone you meet.
- Attending the convention is a great way to get new instant activities to spice up your lessons in your classroom!
- Don't re-invent the wheel and don't be afraid to reach out for help! Most professionals are always willing to share their awesome lessons with you!
- The importance of SEL in the Health and Physical Education Classroom. OPEN has great resources for incorporating SEL into your Physical Education classroom as well as Health Classroom. <https://openphysed.org/>



Emerging Leaders from around the US, including Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Nebraska, collaborating to present a session on the future of Physical Education.



MNSHAPE BOD Members: Amber Fryklund (Higher Ed), Macayla Braun (Emerging Leader Mentor), Shannon Norman (Previous Board Member), Nicollet Gammon-Deering (Emerging Leader VP)