

20 under 40

Lessons in history, community involvement

By Brigid Edmunds

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For Michael Ward, it's all about education.

The history teacher at Coughlin uses his ties to the city as a way to educate not only his students, but those in the community.

Ward, a Coughlin graduate himself, said his interest in both history and teaching came from his own high school experience.

"I had a good history teacher in school," he recalled.

Ward, 32, knew going into college he wanted to teach history, but his journey back to Coughlin was by chance. After serving as a substitute teacher for an entire year, Ward got hired full time.

"It was a little awkward at first," said Ward, as he adjusted to working with the same teachers who taught him. But ultimately, he found his place at the school.

And over time, he's become a driving force.

In addition to teaching his classes, Ward serves as activities director, history club adviser, scholastic scrimmage adviser, scorekeeper for the Coughlin boys basketball team and scorekeeper for the Meyers track and field squad.

Ward said his extracurricular duties

give him more time to engage with students and help them find a potential career path.

"I think it's a unique challenge," he said. "Everybody has their different interests."

Ward wants to help prepare his young charges for wherever life takes them after graduation, from college to the workforce or armed forces.

"It's all about helping children," he said.

Ward is also heavily involved outside of the school. He is a Luzerne County Children and Youth advisory board member, on the Luzerne County Historical Society board of directors and the King's College alumni committee. He was the fourth president of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Friendly Sons of St. Patrick

and the financial secretary at St. Conrad's Young Men's Society.

On top of all that, Ward finds time to teach drivers education for a quad-driving academy and is certified in adult/pediatric first aid, CPR and the use of an AED, or automated external defibrillator.

As a longtime resident of Wilkes-Barre, Ward puts an emphasis on community involvement.

"I think it's about giving back," he said.

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Michael Ward preps for the day prior to classes starting.



At left, Ward sits at his computer at Coughlin High School's Mackin Building.

Below, Ward lectures his Art History class.

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