The 2017 recipient of the NYS AHPERD Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the year Award is Juliann Zelazny Wehner.

Juliann has been a physical education teacher for 29 years in the Rochester City School District. She currently works at the Rochester International Academy, which is a transitional program for newly arrived refugee students who are brand new to the United States. The students speak very little to no English, so physical education has become a “universal language.” Juliann finds ways to reach all of her students and has utilized PE activities to bring together many different cultures, bridging differences and creating a safe haven for her students. She does this by respecting their customs and beliefs, and will research their home countries to find games that she imbeds into her current curriculum. Many of the students have experienced brutal and horrific events while in refugee camps, and Juliann has had to teach them how to play for the mere joy of playing … to be children without any worries. Juliann is an active member of the Central Western Zone and was honored to receive their Teacher of the Year Award in 2015. Her principal states, “Juliann is a highly effective teacher, extremely revered by her colleagues, and loved by her students and their families. She is a true Merchant of Hope, always wanting the best for her students, a true teacher who is willing to put in the work regardless of the challenges.” President Wolfe, it is my honor to present to you the recipient of the 2017 Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year Award, Juliann Zelazny Wehner.