JAPANESE 05/03/2016 K. GALARNO

For the second year in a row, a UW-River Falls student has received an award for giving a speech in a different language. Katie Galarno has the story.

MP3 RUNS 1:21 O/C: STD

KATIE GALARNO: A UW-RIVER FALLS STUDENT HAS RECEIVED AN AWARD FOR GIVING A SPEECH IN JAPANESE FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW. KEVIN LEOR (LEE-or) COMPETED IN THE 30th ANNUAL JAPANESE LANGUAGE SPEECH CONTEST IN CHICAGO AND RECEIVED THE JAPAN AIRLINES AWARD. LEOR’S SPEECH WAS ABOUT HOW PEOPLE IN THE L-G-B-T COMMUNITY IN MEXICO MAY NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE BEING OPEN ABOUT THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS. LEOR SAYS THAT HE’S SURPRISED HE WON ANYTHING, BECAUSE HE DIDN’T ACTUALLY FINISH HIS SPEECH AFTER LOOKING AT HIS MOTHER IN THE AUDIENCE.

KEVIN LEOR: I WAS ONLY THREE LINES AWAY FROM FINISHING IT, AND THEN I SAW HER AND SHE WAS CRYING. AND SO, I COULDN’T FINISH IT. I FORGOT ABOUT EVERYTHING, AND THEN I WAS LIKE, “I’M SORRY. I CAN’T DO THIS.”

KATIE GALARNO: LEOR SAYS THAT AUDIENCE MEMBERS APPROACHED HIM AFTER THE SPEECH TO TELL HIM HOW IT IMPACTED THEM. INSTRUCTOR OF JAPANESE MAGARA (MAH-guh-la) MAEDA (mah-EH-duh) SAYS THAT SHE WASN’T SURE HOW LEOR’S MESSAGE WOULD BE RECEIVED BY THE AUDIENCE BECAUSE IT STRAYED FROM THE USUAL SPEECH TOPICS. UPON HEARING THAT IT WAS RECEIVED WELL, SHE SAYS THAT SHE SAW THE SPEECH AS A SUCCESS BOTH IN TERMS OF GIVING THE SPEECH ITSELF AND SENDING THE MESSAGE.

MAGARA MAEDA: THAT WAS REALLY AMAZING THAT, IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE, HE DID IT AND TOUCHED THE NATIVE SPEAKERS’ HEART, SO I THINK IT’S A GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENT.

KATIE GALARNO: LEOR SAYS THAT HE WILL PROBABLY COMPETE IN THE CONTEST AGAIN NEXT YEAR, EVEN THOUGH HE WILL BE DONE WITH HIS JAPANESE COURSES AT U-W-R-F. FOR THE FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I’M KATIE GALARNO.

The contest is sponsored every year by the Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago and takes place on the fourth Saturday of every March.

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