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# Women of Distinction awards ceremony set for Friday

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Maria Kulikov

Young Woman of Distinction

“It was sort of a no-brainer,” says Homer Flex High School teacher, Alex Koplin, of his decision to nominate Maria Kulikov for the Young Woman of Distinction.

“She’s just an exceptional young lady (who’s) seen a lot and is able to translate that into a positive message,” he said.

Kulikov, a Voznesenka High School senior, was born in Canada and later moved to the lower Kenai Peninsula with her family. She has been a student at Homer High School and Flex High School, and credits Flex with helping her overcome difficulties with public speaking.

Once shy, Kulikov is now involved with the suicide prevention program through Kachemak Bay Family Planning’s Youth R.E.C. Room (Resource and Enrichment Co-op). She is also the student representative on the Kenai Peninsula School Board and is a certified student lawyer and judge with the Youth Court program. She serves as a teacher’s aide in the third through fifth grades at Voznesenka School, and has won the Slam Jam poetry contest at Homer Council on the Arts for the past two years.

As a senior, Kulikov is already preparing for college by taking classes in government and psychology at the Kenai Peninsula College’s Kachemak Bay Campus. She would like to be an educator, especially in the middle school grades.

In his nomination letter for Kulikov, Koplin wrote “I met Maria at Flex High School where she was a student. Right away I noticed her eagerness to learn. She challenges herself to learn beyond what is necessary. She carries an energy about her that is positive, compassionate and enlightened.”