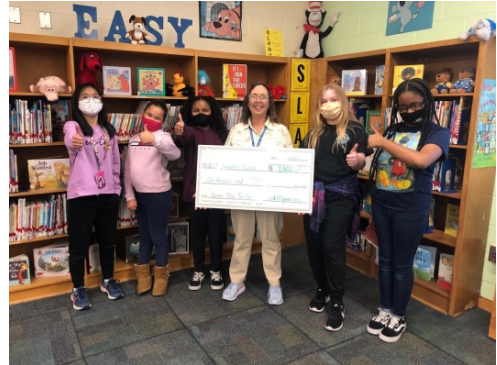




AskHRgreen.org Awards \$10,000 to Region's Green Star Environmental Educators

(Hampton Roads, Va., March 1, 2022) – Creativity in the classroom was worth more than a shiny gold star this week, when askHRgreen.org leaders recognized 10 local educators with its **Green Star Teachers Awards**. Held in concert with the organization's 10th anniversary year, the educator recognition program included a \$1,000 monetary award for each of the teachers to use for future green-themed classroom projects.



“The pandemic has been such a difficult time for students and teachers,” said Rebekah Eastep, an askHRgreen.org team leader. “We wanted to use this special anniversary as a way to give back and recognize educators who have gone above and beyond to promote environmental stewardship in their schools and communities.”

News of the Green Star Teachers program was announced last fall, when nominations opened to any Hampton Roads instructor overseeing unique green-focused studies and projects with K-12 students. An askHRgreen.org steering committee pored over more than 40 nominations sent in from colleagues, parents and administrators, identifying educators who developed and led immersive, ecofriendly teaching experiences for their students.

The winning submissions included teachers from throughout the greater Hampton Roads region. Among the recipients were those who involved their students in planting community gardens, organizing school recycling programs, conducting field trips to the landfill and planting trees on school grounds. One educator had students convert a stormwater pond into an outdoor classroom, while another worked with high school students in project-based engineering and conservation studies on a nearby urban farm.

The Green Star Teachers may use their awards to cover needs such as supplies, classroom resources or funding to underwrite a dynamic “green” student-driven initiative. In accepting the awards, some recipients noted they would use the funds to create an outdoor learning lab, incorporate wind and solar energy into their engineering projects, support oceanography students at an upcoming fair and conduct temperature audits to identify “heat islands” in their city for future tree plantings.

"One common theme among the nominations we received was just how creative and resourceful the region's educators are when it comes to bringing the outdoors into the classroom," said Eastep. "The additional funding will go a long way towards supporting many creative endeavors over the next year."

A decade of educational outreach

The Green Star Teachers program coincides with askHRgreen.org's 10th anniversary year. Groundbreaking when the website launched in July of 2011, the initiative provided a central resource where residents could learn about recycling, smart water use and how to keep local waterways clean.

In developing complementary outreach programs, askHRgreen.org organizers knew reaching students would be a key charge. Over the past decade, the group's Environmental Education Mini-Grant Program has funded over 220 green-themed projects, with more on the way; and rolled out its Green Learning Guides. Written according to Virginia's SOL guidelines, the free educational publications are designed to help teach third and sixth grade students about caring for the environment.

To learn more about the Green Star Teachers recognition program, and to view information/photos of all the recipients and their winning projects, visit [this link](#).

Green Star Teachers Honorees:

Tonya Bangley / Kings Fork High School, Suffolk

Crissie Crusemire / Academy for Discovery at Lakewood, Norfolk

Michele Ferrel / Kilgore Gifted Center, Hampton

Pamela Hall / Carrollton Elementary School, Isle of Wight County

Angela McElroy / Nansemond River High School, Suffolk

Charlie Morse / Williamsburg Community Growers (WCG), James City County

Melissa Powell-Riedl / Paul Burbank Elementary School, Hampton

Jeannette Reynolds / Rosemont Elementary, Virginia Beach

Adrienne Sawyer / Chesapeake Public Schools

Kathleen (Kathy) Shambo / Southside STEM Academy at Campostella, Norfolk

Photo featured in this release: Jeanette Reynolds and Rosemont Elementary students gather for the check presentation in Virginia Beach.

For media use: images of all the Green Star Educators are located at this link: [Green Star Teacher Presentations](#)

About askHRgreen.org Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, askHRgreen.org is your go-to resource for all things green in Hampton Roads – from recycling tips and pointers for keeping local waterways clean to water-saving ideas and simple steps to make local living easy on the environment. Launched in 2011, the region-wide public awareness and education campaign is administered through the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and powered by the following members: The cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg; the counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, Surry and York; the town of Smithfield; and HRSD. Like askHRgreen.org on [Facebook](#), follow on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), tune in to [YouTube](#) and catch the “Let’s Talk Green” [blog](#), written by a team of local experts.

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