

GEFFE Shining Stars nominees announced

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GROVE - Three educators have been selected by the Grove Education Foundation for Excellence (GEFFE) as this year's Shining Star Award nominees. The 2020 Shining Star winner will be announced at the annual GEFFE Gala, April 4, at the Grove Civic Center.

The GEFFE Board of Directors reviewed over 75 grants submitted by educators in the Grove School District. The Board then voted on the top three grant recipients whose creativity promotes GEFFE's primary goal of excellence in education. All three Shining Star nominees will receive a trophy designed by Society Awards, founded by Grove High School graduate David Moritz, and the winner will receive a \$500 cash award from GEFFE. The runners up will each receive a \$100 cash award.

This year's nominees are no strangers to GEFFE's Shining Star process as each educator has been a previous nominee.

Miranda Ward

Miranda Ward, the Upper Elementary School librarian, was nominated for her grant "Get Books!! Not Twix!!" The grant of \$4,735 allowed Ward to purchase a Bookworm Vending Machine which distributes books instead of soda or candy. Students will have the opportunity to earn special tokens which will then allow them to "purchase" a book through the vending machine.

"The Bookworm Vending Machine is a wonderful way to incentivize children to read and help promote literacy," Ward said. "It will support positive student behavior, give students the power of selecting their book, and provide students with books they can keep."

Ward, who has been with Grove School District since 2012, is a graduate of Northeastern State University, where she earned a degree in elementary education in 2005. In 2017, she received a Master of Science Degree in Library Media and Information Technology from NSU's Broken Arrow campus. She taught in Miami and Wyandotte before joining Grove Schools as a 5th grade teacher. She became the Upper Elementary librarian in 2017.

In 2013, Ward was one of four teachers whose grant for a literacy program in the Upper Elementary was nominated for the Shining Star award.

Ward is married to John Henry Ward, a teacher and coach at Grove. They have two daughters, Gweneth and Locklyn, who also attend Grove Schools.

Terri Guthridge

High School English teacher Terri Guthridge was nominated for her grant “Better Chats with Podcasts!” The grant of \$775.87 will allow her students to create and produce podcasts, and will enhance their interviewing, digital media and production skills.

“Students will have to use researching skills to prepare, and create introductory and closing statements which strengthen writing skills,” Guthridge said. “Students will also learn the importance of transitions and word choice. I want my students to be problem solvers and critical thinkers so I need to teach them how to be great speakers and communicators.”

A former music teacher, Guthridge was a nominee in 2008 for a grant aimed at helping lower elementary students learn about other cultures through a world-wide variety of music and musical instruments.

Last spring, Guthridge was named the Grove School District’s Teacher of the Year and she was one of 12 finalists for the Oklahoma Teacher of the Year award. She obtained her degree in elementary education from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah. She and her husband, Todd Guthridge, have two children, T.J. and Hannah.

Jeanne Smith

High School teacher Jeanne Smith was nominated for her grant “To Infinity AND Beyond with Virtual Reality Across the Curriculum.” She received over \$6,800 to fund the purchase of virtual, augmented and mixed reality headsets for the high school STEM Lab.

“Through VR headsets and apps, students can be transported to historic and ancient sites that they learn about in their history and social studies classes,” Smith explained. “Students can immerse themselves in the locations they read about in English literature. Students studying Spanish can experience the language, culture, and landmarks of Spanish-speaking countries around the globe. They will be able to experience learning in ways that are not possible in the traditional classroom.”

This is Smith’s fourth Shining Star nomination. She was named the Shining Star in 2007, 2012 and in 2015. A 1986 Grove High School graduate, Smith received a bachelor’s degree in mathematics, with a minor in computer Science and later a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Texas in Arlington. Smith returned to Grove in 2001 and obtained her National Board Certification in mathematics in 2009.

Smith and her husband, Scott, also a Grove alumnus, have two children, Cameron and Courtney.

About GEFFE

Since its inception in 1997, GEFPE has donated well over \$1,300,000 to Grove schools through the funding of grants and special projects. The GEFPE Gala is the primary fundraiser for the organization and tickets are available by calling (918) 791-1974.