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NEWS RELEASE

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Windy Hill Middle School's Jessica Woods named Lake County Schools 2023 Teacher of the Year

LEESBURG – Jessica Woods, an AVID Coordinator and Literacy Coach at Windy Hill Middle School in Clermont, is the 2023 Lake County Schools Teacher of the Year.

Woods, a Clermont resident, was announced the winner at last night's Teacher of the Year celebration, hosted by the Education Foundation of Lake County and presented by Jenkins Auto Group, Duke Energy and Ernie Morris Enterprises.

Woods was named the winner by a panel of judges from outside the district, who reviewed her application, interviewed administrators and peers and observed her in the classroom.

Woods has been working in education for 18 years. Thirteen of those have been in Florida and the last three of those in her current position as the AVID coordinator and literacy coach at Windy Hill Middle. She has changed the attitude and culture towards post-secondary education with her students. She was also instrumental in developing C2Prep throughout the district. In her tenure as an educator, Woods has a proven track record for helping students succeed.

Woods wrote in her application about teaching, "My challenge as an educator is to instill confidence in these students. When I have a student who truly believes they are incapable of successfully completing a task or skill, I am driven to help them. Being a part of the moments when a student gains their confidence and voice in a classroom inspires me as an educator to keep going. When I help a student make a connection or realize they can master something they thought was impossible, I am inspired to continue the work that I do each and every day."



"Jessica Woods is an exceptional educator and the teacher that every child deserves! She cares deeply for her students, going to great lengths to ensure the success of every child!" said

Windy Hill Middle School Principal William Roberts. “Jessica is always asking how she can help, the epitome of our OnePack culture! We could not be prouder of Mrs. Woods! #OnePack”

In addition to the designation as Lake County’s 2023 Teacher of the Year, Woods will receive a 2021 Nissan Rogue from Jenkins Auto Group that she’ll be able to drive for three years. Insight Credit Union has donated a \$500 gas card and Jostens will present her with an official Teacher of the Year ring. Woods is pictured below with Maria Patino and Anthony Guillaume from Jenkins Auto Group getting the keys to her new Nissan.



As Lake County’s Teacher of the Year, Woods moves on to the statewide competition and will be reviewed by a Florida Department of Education state selection committee. The Florida Teacher of the Year finalists will be announced in May and the 2023 Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year will be named in July 2022.

“Congratulations to

Jessica Woods, our Teacher of the Year. This has been yet another year of challenges for our teachers. All of those honored tonight have responded with grace, flexibility and care.” said Superintendent Diane Kornegay. “Jessica stands out for exceptional achievement in spite of the challenges, representing the best of the best. I am excited for her and for what her continued commitment means for our students and our district as a whole.”

Courtney Stokes, a Science teacher at Tavares High, Patrick Kelly, a Science teacher at Leesburg High, and Danielle Newton, a 3rd grade teacher at Leesburg Elementary were District finalists along with Woods. Forty-nine teachers were celebrated by 300 plus of our closest friends in education for excellence in teaching.

As the district liaison to the Florida Department of Education, the Education Foundation of Lake County coordinates all awards and recognition events including the annual Lake County Schools Teacher of the Year Awards program.

About the Education Foundation of Lake County

Established in 1987, Education Foundation of Lake County is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and designated direct support organization for Lake County Schools. Our mission is to serve as the connection between our community and public education, evaluating needs and securing resources to enhance the quality of education. The Education Foundation of Lake County operates for the benefit of students and teachers in Lake County Public Schools.

Education Foundation of Lake County is ranked among the Top 50 Education Foundations in the United States by the Caruthers Institute. For more info, please visit EdFoundationLake.com.

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