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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **2023 Lake Rookie Teacher of the Year and 2022 School-Related Employee of the Year Announced** *East Ridge High's William Fouraker and Eustis Middle's Shaun Smith honored.*

LEESBURG – Two professionals dedicated to producing future leaders of industry and keeping smiles on the faces of their students are being celebrated by the Lake County school district.

William “Lee” Fouraker, the TV Production Teacher at East Ridge High school, was named the 2023 Rookie Teacher of the Year.

Shaun Smith, the Head Custodian at Eustis Middle School, is the 2022 School-Related Employee of the Year.

Both were announced the winners of their respective categories at a celebration event, presented by Insight Credit Union and hosted by the Education Foundation of Lake County. School district staff, dignitaries and sponsors were on hand to recognize Fouraker and Smith along with this year's Rookie Teacher of the Year and School-Related Employee of the Year honorees from other Lake County schools.

Fouraker, who has been teaching a little over three years, had a long career in the television production industry. While teaching he has encouraged his students to find more information about his fellow teachers for the school's website.

“In my class, hard work beats talent, when talent doesn't work hard,” wrote Fouraker in his application for Rookie Teacher of the Year.



2023 Rookie Teacher of the Year William “Lee” Fouraker, center, with School Board Member Bill Mathias, Lake County Schools Superintendent Diane Kornegay, East Ridge High School Principal Julie Robinson-Lueallen, and School Board member Marc Dodd.

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Alexa Dejarlais, a kindergarten teacher at Fruitland Park Elementary and Tori Grable, a fifth grade teacher at Seminole Springs Elementary were district finalists with Fouraker. Forty-two rookie teachers were recognized by peers at their respective Lake County schools for excellence in teaching.

Smith has been the head custodian at Eustis Middle for the last four years and took on the role of assistant flag football coach and head basketball coach this school year.

Smith is known for his attention to detail and friendly demeanor when it comes to tasks around campus. He works to put smiles on the faces of the teachers, staff, parents, and students.



2022 School-Related Employee of the Year Shaun Smith with School Board Member Bill Mathias, Lake County Schools Superintendent Diane Kornegay, Eustis Middle School Principal Abby Crosby, and School Board Member Marc Dodd.

“Nothing is impossible with Mr. Smith. No one can have a better attitude than Mr. Smith. No one deserves this recognition more than Mr. Smith. He positively represents not only Eustis Middle School, but all of Lake County Schools, with his exemplary work ethic and positive attitude,” wrote Abigail Crosby, Eustis Middle School Principal in a letter of recommendation.

Smith advances to the Florida School-Related Employee of the Year program. The winner of the statewide program will be announced later this spring.

Along with Smith, the district’s School-Related Employee of the Year finalists were Serita Morgan, a family school liaison at Beverly Shores Elementary; and Susan Johnson, a teacher’s assistant at Fruitland Park Elementary. Thirty-three school employees were recognized by peers at their respective Lake County schools for their dedication to support teachers and students.

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 School-Related Employee of the Year and Rookie Teacher of the Year programs.

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