



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

NEWS RELEASE

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Jolene Jenkins Named DoDEA 2002 Teacher of the Year

ARLINGTON, VA—Dr. Joseph D. Tafoya, Director, Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), announced today that Ms. Jolene Jenkins has been selected DoDEA's 2002 Teacher of the Year. Ms. Jenkins teaches grade 7 language arts at Mahaffey Middle School, Fort Campbell School District, Kentucky. She has taught school for 29 years; she came to DoDEA and Mahaffey in 1987.

The purpose of the DoDEA Teacher of the Year program is to recognize and promote excellence in education. Teachers can be nominated by a peer, an administrator, a parent, or a student at their school. Nominees complete application packets, which are then submitted to the appropriate DoDEA District Office where a panel assembled by the District Superintendent selects the District Teacher of the Year. A panel assembled by DoDEA Headquarters selects the DoDEA Teacher of the Year from the District selections. The DoDEA Teacher of the Year is then submitted as a candidate to the National Teacher of the Year Program.

Nominated teachers complete an application packet made up of nine components including a professional biography, a philosophy of teaching, an essay on the teaching profession, and a videotape presentation. Each component has a designated point value from 5 to 25, for a total of 130 points. Teacher selection is made based on an application's total point value.

Ms. Jenkins' educational accomplishments at Mahaffey include implementing a school-wide after-school mentoring program to assist academically struggling students; coordinating and training mentors from the school's adopted military unit, the post's youth services, parents from the community, and students from the National Junior Honor Society and the high school; and implementing a Reading Buddy partnership between seventh grade reading students and students in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade classrooms. Ms. Jenkins is also active in her community, tutoring middle and high school students in acquiring new English grammar and writing skills; offering instruction in the development of writing skills to local university students; participating in various church-related activities, including serving as her church pianist, adult choir director, and youth music director; and being a foster parent to two small children as she worked with their young mother to establish a nurturing home environment and learn appropriate parenting skills.

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Ms. Jenkins' philosophy of teaching reflects her love of her profession and the children she teaches: "A teacher fosters critical thinking, facilitates the acquisition of life-long learning skills, encourages an excitement for learning, and prepares students to function effectively in the world outside of the classroom. ... I want students to take responsibility for their education, become independent learners, and understand that success is ultimately up to them. I want them to know that learning is an active process with learners given an active role. ... The greatest reward is seeing students develop new skills, stretch to a higher level of performance, and gain an appreciation of knowledge and learning that will impact the rest of their lives."

"It is our teachers, not the textbooks or the methods or the classrooms, who largely determine the quality of our educational programs," said Dr. Tafoya in making the announcement. "It is our teachers who inspire effort, who encourage achievement, who awaken joy in learning and knowledge. I am proud of all of DoDEA's teachers. But I am especially proud to honor Jolene Jenkins as our 2002 Teacher of the Year. She is truly 'making a difference' in the lives of the students she teaches."

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