



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

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Patricia Salerno Named 2006 DoDEA Teacher of the Year

Arlington - DoDEA proudly announces the selection of Ms. Patricia J. Salerno as the 2006 DoDEA Teacher of the Year.

A 35-year teaching veteran, Ms. Salerno is currently a 4th grade teacher at Vicenza Elementary School, in Vicenza, Italy. Her career includes teaching Kindergarten through the eighth grade in several DoDEA schools and districts including Izmir Elementary School in Izmir, Turkey and Fort Campbell Schools in Fort Campbell Kentucky. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Education at the Ohio State University and a Master of Arts in Education from the University of Arizona.

The purpose of the DoDEA Teacher of the Year program is to recognize and promote excellence in education. Teachers may be nominated by a peer, administrator, parent, or student. 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 second panel assembled at DoDEA Headquarters then selects the DoDEA Teacher of the Year from the candidates submitted by each district. The DoDEA Teacher of the Year competes for the title of the National Teacher of the Year.

The Teacher of the Year program encourages teachers to take an active part in educational leadership. As outstanding educators, selectees perform a variety of roles. They promote the teaching profession, and work with school officials to enhance the quality of teaching and the education of young people in DoDEA.

Nominated teachers complete an application packet consisting of nine components including a professional biography, list of community involvement, a philosophy of teaching, an essay on the teaching profession and major public education issues, and a videotape presentation. Each component has a designated point value from 5 to 25, for a total of 135 points. Teacher selection is based upon an application's total point value following a telephonic interview with top candidates.

In selecting Ms. Salerno, the panel cited her leadership in the Partial Language Immersion Program at Vicenza Elementary School. Salerno believes strongly in involving the parents and families whenever possible in her students' accomplishments, "because my class is Partial Language Immersion, families who never felt comfortable exploring Italy suddenly begin to appreciate the culture because one of the students is now the family interpreter" says Salerno, "The students are not only prepared to become part of the global community, but I've helped open the minds of their families also."

The panel also cited Ms. Salerno's accomplishments on the DoDEA Science Curriculum Task Force and as Science Fair Planner at both Naples Elementary and Vicenza Elementary Schools. Salerno credits her own teachers and her parents for her success. "The factors that influenced me to become an educator were my parents and teachers. Through their enthusiasm for education, I became aware that teaching and learning were a continual life process, which didn't end when the bell rang."

Salerno is an active community volunteer. With twenty five years of experience as an Army spouse, she has forged a kinship with the community-at-large and assisted in the development of a cooperative community spirit. Her volunteer work has included interpreting in Italian for the Officer's Wives Clubs charity bazaars and working in thrift shops in which all proceeds go to scholarships and grants.

If selected as the 2006 National Teacher of the Year Salerno says her message would be clear - "Keep learning whether you are a student, teacher, parent, grandparent, or a single adult with no children, keep learning." And she practices what she preaches, serving as a mentor to new teachers and as an example for her peers. "I feel fortunate to have her on the Vicenza Elementary School team" says School Principal Alice Herring, "not only is she a fine teacher for the students that she serves, but a teacher of teachers, and a true leader in the school."

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