

Teacher Raises Bar Of Expectation For Students

(NAPSA)—Many people could learn a valuable lesson from the National Teacher of the Year.

In her classroom, at first, all is silent. Horns are gently raised to puckered lips, violins rest on narrow shoulders and youthful fingers hover over musical keys. Then, on cue, a harmonious burst fills the air as students of Monte Cristo Elementary School in Granite Falls, Wash., blow their horns, pluck their string instruments and run their nimble fingers across white keyboards. Andrea Peterson stands leading this exuberant group of student musicians, and she is proud to see them achieve such great musical heights.

She's achieved a few herself. Peterson wanted to help others. When she visited her two brothers in college, both of whom were majoring in music education, she realized she could combine her passion for music with her desire to serve others.

Peterson Honored At White House

Peterson's commitment to partnering with parents and the community to enhance and strengthen the educational foundation of all students; her role as mentor to peers; her approach to cross-curricular teaching; and a strong desire to see students achieve success in all courses are just a few reasons she was recently honored by President George W. Bush at a White House ceremony as the National Teacher of the Year. A



Andrea Peterson

10-year veteran of education, Peterson not only works tirelessly to ensure that her students receive the resources needed to have a meaningful and successful music program, she teaches them skills that are transferable and applicable to other courses. All of this results in failing students becoming successful students. Her motto: Mediocrity is not an option.

Educational Achievements

Peterson has earned several awards and is a member of numerous education-based programs. Her development of a cross-curricular approach to teaching is now being applied to other subjects.

For instance, as part of their reading curriculum, her students read "The Outsiders." To support their efforts outside of the music realm, Peterson challenged her students to write a 30-minute musical play that included scenes from the book. They created a soundtrack to accompany

the novel; studied the book from a literary point of view; learned about tone, setting, plot, character development, conflict and resolution; and were able to apply that learning to a real-world context. "We had such rich discussions about why certain music was appropriate to the story," Peterson said. "We talked about issues of race, equality and social injustice that led students to discover the author's deeper intentions. All this learning culminated in a spectacular performance of "The Outsiders" written by my students."

National Program

The National Teacher of the Year Program highlights teaching excellence by focusing on the achievements and contributions of the individual chosen for this award, the oldest and most prestigious honors program for teachers. It is a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and sponsored by ING.

ING also honors education excellence through its Unsung Heroes program. The primary objective is to help educators manage their financial resources by providing retirement programs and planning to educators across the country.

Learn More

For additional information on the National Teacher of the Year Program, visit www.ccsso.org/ntoy. To learn more about the company's commitment to education, visit www.ing.com/us.