

Nassau County Selects Ashley Taylor of Callahan Elementary as 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year



Ashley Taylor, first-grade teacher at Callahan Elementary School, was named Nassau County's 2024 Teacher of the Year. Over 400 educators and supporters attended the annual gala held at the Ritz Carlton for the announcement. Ashley has taught for 8 years in Callahan and currently serves as the grade level chair, a member of the leadership committee, the chair of the SAC committee, and the yearbook advisor.

"The opportunity to make a difference in a young child's life, through their education, is one I am truly passionate about - being able to equip students with the tools to be successful and the confidence to do so, is one that I am so blessed to do each and every day," said Taylor. In addition, Ashley has been an active member of the Callahan community where she has taught dance for over 20 years and now serves as the Studio Director at Callahan Dance Academy.

"Ashley's passion shows in her dedication to the classroom and we are thrilled to honor and celebrate her accomplishments," said Executive Director Susan DeVane. The 9th annual event was hosted by Congressman Aaron Bean and Event Chair Brandy Carvalho as they recognized teachers of the year from every school. "We are an A-rated school district as a result of the hard work and commitment from our educators," said Carvalho. "They truly make our job exciting and proud to present grants for their classroom." The night was filled with excitement and recognition as another outstanding leader was honored. Abby Bean, former Executive Director and founder of the Nassau Education Foundation was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award for her years of service and nearly \$1 million raised toward classroom grants. "Abby has made all this possible. She is the reason we can do so much for teachers today," said DeVane. NEF hosted the annual event to celebrate Nassau County



Pictured: Top - Ashley Taylor Center with Susan DeVane, Heather Morenc, Jeanevete Miranda, School Board Chair Dr. Cynthia Grooms, 2023 TOY Amanda Sauls, Superintendent Dr. Kathy Burns and Congressman Aaron Bean; Bottom Left - Abby Bean; Above Right - NEF Board of Directors and Superintendent; Bottom Right - Ashley Taylor.

teachers and raised over \$130,000 for classroom grants. The success of this year's gala, sponsored in part by RYAM, Rayonier and United Health, is a testament to the unwavering support of sponsors, donors, and attendees who recognize the value of investing in education. Every dollar raised will directly impact classrooms across Nassau County, empowering teachers to innovate and inspire the next generation of learners.

Congressman Aaron Bean Honors Dr. Burns and District with Flag for A+ School District Achievement

U.S. Representative Aaron Bean added to the excitement of the 2024 Nassau County Teacher of the Year Gala with a surprise presentation. Congressman Bean took the stage to present Dr. Burns with a remarkable tribute—a special commemorative A+ flag. "This emblem serves to celebrate the district's remarkable journey, marking seven straight years of recognition as an A grade school district," said Bean, "This isn't about having a good year; this is about being consistently exceptional in educating the leaders of tomorrow."



Pictured: Top: Jeanevete Miranda - President of NEF, Brandy Carvalho - Gala Chair NEF; Bottom: Gary Virden - Board Member NEF, Dr. Kathy Burns, - Superintendent, Congressman Aaron Bean.



Grant Snapshot



It is a great day when we get to see our grants in action! Ms. Fancher and Ms. Bovinette lead a tour through Jurassic Park in the totally transformed second grade wing at Wildlight Elementary. It was wild indeed!

The goal of this grant was to provide students with a fun, new and exciting learning environment by changing the classroom décor into a room transformation that resembled Jurassic Park. This new learning environment set the tone for the content being taught across all subject areas and provided rigorous hands-on learning opportunities all week long. Students of all learning abilities became much more motivated to learn because their classroom was a different learning environment which allowed them to see their standards-based content in a different way. As dinosaur experts during the room transformation, students collaborated with each other and built better communication skills when discussing the various dinosaurs they were learning about and when participating in the STEM activity. We love the creativity and dedication of our teachers!



Inaugural NEF Mystery 5K to Be Held June 1

Runners, joggers, and walkers - The Nassau Education Foundation and the Amelia Island Runners Club are hosting a 5K run/walk on Saturday, June 1 to raise money and generate support for our local educators. Food trucks will be on-site along with entertainment by

DJ Reverb. Exciting prizes await the top finishers and winners of intriguing mystery categories. There will be an additional prize for the school with the highest student participation. Kick off the summer with the family in a healthy and active way! Don't miss out - register today at nassaueducationfoundation.org!

Record \$59,000 in New Grants Awarded to Nassau County Teachers and Schools for 2024-2025 School Year

This April NEF will begin awarding record grant funding to Nassau County schools, teachers and students. According to grant chair Kim Lunt the quality of grant requests was exceptional. "Our county teachers put a great deal of creative thought into their plans to enhance the education experience for students." Grants are awarded to each Nassau District School that applies and reach every grade level in the district. Says Ms. Lunt, "Our grant panels consisting of educators and community leaders rate grants against a detailed rubric to determine which grants receive funding each year. Of course we wish we could fund them all! We want to thank the community for supporting the work of the foundation through the grant program and The Consortium of Florida Education Foundation matching grant program."