

VFW Announces Top Teachers in National Contest

Each teacher will be awarded \$1,000 for their development and for their school

Apr 07, 2020

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is proud to announce it has selected the national top three teachers in its annual Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award contest.

Established in 1999 and named after former VFW National Commander John Smart and retired VFW Quartermaster General Larry Maher, the award recognizes our nation's top teachers for their exceptional commitment to teaching Americanism and patriotism to their students by promoting civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism in the classroom.

Awarded annually, the VFW selects one teacher from the elementary (K-5), middle (6-8) and high school (9-12) levels to receive a \$1,000 award for professional development, and \$1,000 for their school.

Megan Joy Rodgers, a fourth-grade teacher at Brookfield Elementary School in Brookfield, Ohio, was named the elementary school winner for her creative qualities, character and frequent efforts to organize field trips, activities and services to help her students learn about and recognize America's veterans and their military service.

Selected to represent the middle school level is Michael Russell, an eighth grade science teacher at Bridgewater-Raritan Middle School in Bridgewater, New Jersey. A former sergeant with the Army National Guard and volunteer firefighter, he was chosen for his work creating initiatives designed to educate his students and the school on the importance and sacrifices of America's veterans.

Matthew Bundy, an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel who served 20 years and now teaches 12th grade American government at Mountain Home High School in Mountain Home, Idaho, was chosen to represent the high school level for the innovation and passion he brings to his

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

classroom, and for going above and beyond to encourage civic responsibility and activism in his students.

“If the current pandemic has taught us anything, it’s that our nation depends on having strong and resilient leaders, and teachers like Megan, Michael and Matthew play a vital role in shaping today’s youth into the leaders we need for a successful future,” said VFW National Commander William “Doc” Schmitz. “The VFW is honored to recognize these teachers, and the teachers and instructors like them across our nation who help promote the importance of patriotism and civic responsibility.”

[Nominate a teacher you know](#) at your local VFW Post, or find out more information on the [Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award](#).