

# Strassburg teacher given national honor for Changing World project

BY JOAN CARREON

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Strassburg Elementary School third-grade teacher Tammy Haggerty Jones won a Teacher of the Year award from the Kids In Need Foundation

SAUK VILLAGE | A creative social studies project that included edible amber fossils and coral polyps and a classroom replica of the Field Museum's Evolving Planet exhibit not only grabbed the attention of Strassburg Elementary School third-grade students, but also landed Tammy Haggerty Jones a Teacher of the Year award.

The Sauk Village third-grade teacher was one of two classroom instructors across the country to win the first-time award from the Kids in Need Foundation based in Dayton, Ohio.

Sauk Village Elementary District 168 Superintendent Rudy Williams called the honor "great news" and said Haggerty Jones is one of the district's staff who goes "above and beyond."

Known for her innovative approach to teaching, the Homewood woman received a \$500 cash prize, which she said she has already set aside for her 12-year-old son's college education, and 31 boxes of student school and art supplies.

"We have funded about five of her (Haggerty Jones') projects over the past several years. This year we started the

Teacher of the Year awards and one of our board members said our only trepidation about this is if we get a (grant) application from Tammy every year, how are we going to keep from picking her every year?" said Penny Hawk, managing director of the Kids in Need Foundation.

"Every application, every project she submits is stellar."

Overwhelmed by the foundation's generosity, Haggerty Jones wound up sharing the supplies with all third-, fourth- and fifth-grade teachers at Strassburg.

"This means I won't have to ask my son to sacrifice for my classroom, even though he does without a blink of an eye. And I don't have to put him in that awkward spot or feel guilty for not putting more in his college fund when I want to do something for my class," Haggerty Jones said.

Haggerty Jones estimates she typically spends between \$3,500 and \$4,000 a year on projects and supplies for her students and predicts other teachers also annually fund basic student needs that sometime include socks, gloves, sweaters, hats, folders and backpacks.

"Now I'm in a position to share with others who can give to their students so that they (students) don't feel ashamed not having a pencil or crayon at school," she said, adding this also reflects the philosophy of Kids in Need.

The classroom unit that led to Haggerty Jones' acclaim is entitled Our Changing World: From Trilobites to Mastodons and was introduced to students last year. It gave students the chance to explore the evolutionary process through imagination, play, food, art and the general curriculum.

Supplies for the project were funded by a grant from Kids in Need. The organization has funded five of her classroom projects.

"The Kids in Need Foundation gave me back my sanity and time to sleep. I enjoy writing curriculum that engages my students in active learning. The units usually stemmed from a family vacation," Haggerty Jones said. "No matter how hard I tried to relax and unwind, the creative juices in my head wouldn't turn off."

