CAST Excellence in Science Teaching, Elementary: **Paige Kraus**

AVS Excellence in Science Teaching, Elementary: **Janet Krompier**

CAST Excellence in Science Teaching, Secondary: **Elizabeth Henrikson**

AVS Excellence in Science Teaching, Secondary: **Alicia Mauer**

CAST Excellence in Science Teaching, Informal/College: **Rose Di Censo**

AVS Excellence in Science Teaching, Informal/College: **Birgit Landin**

Pre-Service Award: **Emma DeHerrera**

CAST Rising Star Award: **Damion Templeton**

CAST Friend of Science: **Heather Hubbard**

Distinguished Service in Science: **Kellie Land**

Valuable Service on CAST Board: **Sandy Lamb** (Secretary), **Sandy Smith** (Treasurer), and **DeLene Hoffner** (President, Region 2 Elementary Director, and Awards)

In Memory Of: **Ann Elizabeth Ratcliffe**

Colorado Outstanding Biology Teaching Award: **Jennie Edgar**

AACT Chemistry Teacher of the Year: **Ryan Johnson**

Colorado Finalists Presidential Award for Excellence in Science Teaching: **Allison Le Warne, Autumn Rivera**

Colorado Awardee for Presidential Award for Excellence in Science Teaching: **Stephanie Basile**

**Many Thanks!**

The Colorado Science Conference thanks our award sponsors: **CAST** (Colorado Association of Science Teachers), **NABT** (National Association of Biology Teachers), **AVS** (American Vacuum Society-Rocky Mountain Chapter) and the **PAEMST** (Presidential Awards for Excellence in Math or Science Teaching).

**CAST Excellence in Science Teaching Award – Elementary**

Paige Kraus is in her 41st year of teaching. Her career as an educator has spanned nearly every grade level from kindergarten to college in three different states. She has been honored by her colleagues as the Teacher of the Year and a member of the Team of the Year at two different schools in District 20, named as one of the Jared Polis Foundation Teachers of the Year, and deemed an Outstanding Lead Facilitator at University of Phoenix where she served as an instructor in the School of Education.

Paige has served as a teacher leader most of her career and has led numerous trainings and workshops for educators. She currently serves as the STEM Educator at Encompass Heights Elementary School in Academy School District 20 which is a STEM school. She teaches every child in grades K-5, trains all our teachers in STEM pedagogy, leads several after school enrichment classes and facilitates a STEM Summer Camp. Not only do students need an academic education, they also need to learn how to think critically and have the confidence to take the risks necessary to learn. This type of education happens best in an environment that is emotionally safe and based in mutual respect among students and teachers.

**AVS Excellence in Science Teaching Award – Elementary**

Janet began her teaching career in California in 1983. She has taught in several states but found her home in Colorado in 2003. Janet has been the Science and STEM educator at High Plains Elementary School since 2006, sharing science with preschoolers through 5th grade. During her tenure at HPE, she was selected as the STEM Coordinator for Academy District 20 as a Teacher on Special Assignment. At the conclusion of the 3 year granted position, she returned to her lab and has been happily teaching science ever since. She is also a founding member of eleSTEMary, Pikes Peak Coalition for Elementary STEM Education in its 10th year now.

Janet’s passion for STEM education is fueled by one thing- “It’s all about the kids!” She derives great pleasure from connecting with the community to bring outside experts into the lab. Janet continues her own education and makes it a priority to be in the know on all things science and STEM. Janet promotes engineering and problem solving via her annual Hour of Code event as well as Fairy Tale Engineering during Engineer’s Week.
Awards continued

CAST Excellence in Science Teaching Award – Secondary

A teacher for over 20 years, Elizabeth "Liz" is a 6th/7th grade science/STEM teacher at Fruita Middle School, Mesa County Valley School District 51. She also is a Co Advisor of MESA Team. Along with her teaching, Liz is a teacher liaison for the Space Foundation, a certified National Geographic educator, member of the 100Kto10 (STEM initiative), Co-President of Delta Kappa Gamma-Alpha Mu chapter, and board president of the Children’s Nature Center in Grand Junction, CO. She was named D51’s Outstanding Educator in 2019 and the Air Force Association State Teacher of the year 20-21. Elizabeth Henrikson gives her all to her classroom, school, district and community. She provides opportunities for students to engage with live-time science, and helps build their love of science.

Elizabeth states, “A never-ending thank you to all my former teachers and mentor teachers who have influenced and shaped the teacher I am. A special thank you to Heidi Ragsdale for ALWAYS believing in me; even when I didn’t. To my husband who married a teacher and helps make all my crazy ideas a reality. To my parents who gave me my wings to fly and Dare Mighty Things!”

AVS Excellence in Science Teaching Award – Secondary

In her 15th year of teaching science, Alicia Mauer works at Woodland Park High School. She has worked with diverse populations in suburban and rural areas of the front range region of Colorado teaching chemistry, biology, anatomy, and AP environmental science. She holds a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and is currently working on a Master's in Biological Sciences at the University of Northern Colorado. She hopes to teach concurrent college level science classes at Woodland Park High School in the near future. She is passionate about all of the classes she teaches, but especially the environmental sciences and building a community of environmental stewardship through high school students.

Alicia has been involved as a leader for Envirothon, a competition-based environmental science team in which students train with field scientists and study to compete against other teams on environmental problems and proposed solutions nationwide. She believes in providing exemplary learning experiences and has taken students to Sand Dunes National Park, power plants, wastewater treatment facilities, the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, and the Denver Aquatic Center to learn from professionals in the field. Alicia says, “My career goal is centered on building solutions-oriented environmental education in our community that will enrich the lives of students, their everyday choices, and perhaps expose them to being involved in careers that help make the world a better place for future generations to come.”

CAST Excellence in Science Teaching Award – Informal/College

Rose Di Censo has volunteered with Colorado Parks and Wildlife in Colorado Springs for over 32 years. With CPW she has worked at wildlife festivals, done school presentations, monitored raptors, captured injured wild animals and worked with wildlife rehabilitators, mapped prairie dog colonies for the release of black-footed ferrets, and teach archery at Mueller State Park and Cheyenne Mountain State Park.

Rose also taught Project Wild at Colorado College for 19 years and was an original core team member for the T.E.N. Project for 20 years. She works with several of the terrestrial biologists on various projects (bat surveys, black-footed ferret releases, plague management, etc.). For the past 4 years she has led interpretive hikes at Corral Bluffs school programs and serves on the board of Corral Bluffs Alliance. Rose holds a masters in Arts in Teaching and Integrated Natural Sciences. In her 32 year teaching career, Rose has taught in District 20 & District 11, and Super Saturday Program at UCSC.

AVS Excellence in Science Teaching Award – Informal/College

Birgit Landin has been providing community water and energy education and outreach services for Colorado Springs Utilities since 2011. She conducts presentations, workshops, community events, school programs and statewide education forums to engage citizens of all ages in water and energy efficiency and protection. She and the direct potable reuse demonstration team were recently recognized nationally by WateReuse Association for Excellence in Education and Outreach. Birgit holds a B.S. in Geology from the University of New Mexico and has worked in municipal, state government and private consulting on environmental cleanup, water supply and water quality issues for 20+ years. Prior to joining Utilities, Birgit served seven years as a City of Colorado Springs Park Interpreter at Garden of the Gods park. She is an avid supporter of our natural resources serving as a Board Member of the Trails and Open Space Coalition and spends her free time hiking local trails with her husband, two adult children and dog.

Image: Carina Nebula/NASA, ESA, CSA, and STScI
Awards continued

CAST Pre-Service Award
Emma did her student teaching at Monte Vista High School. During this semester, she has designed the curriculum for the pre-biology and the pre-chemistry courses. She also taught the second-year advanced chemistry course. In all of her classes she implemented labs often using the probeware. She uses POGILs with her general chemistry and biology classes. Her students know that she cares about them and their learning. They have expressed how hard she works to help them understand chemistry.

As a student teacher, she has also worked with students on their science research projects, accompanying them to the college chemistry lab to use equipment. Her chemistry professors trust her to supervise the students and have opened up their labs for Emma’s students. All of this has been done on her time after she teaches classes all day. Emma strives to hone her skills as an educator. She is truly a life-long learner herself.

Her supervisor, Michele Mann says “Emma is already changing her students’ lives before she even graduates from college. She is providing the students with a rich science classroom experience and believes that her students can be successful. She is already supporting the students in their science research beyond her teaching position. She has the passion and the dedication to contribute to science education in Colorado now and in the future.” Emma graduated in May.

CAST Rising Star Award
Damion Templeton is a second year science teacher at Florence Jr/Sr High School. He found his way to education after spending several years in the workforce as well as volunteering his time with local zoos. During his time volunteering he realized he enjoyed teaching others far more than interacting with the animals and being in the field. He is currently working towards his licensure and a Masters degree in Curriculum Development at UCCS. During his two years at Florence he has become extremely involved with his student population. Damion works hard to create a community of collaboration and acceptance within his classroom. He proudly sponsors several social clubs on campus, helping to break down barriers between his students. At the request of the students he has been honored to play a major role in the student council. His greatest achievement outside of this award, was being nominated as New Teacher of the Year by his peers. He would like to thank his peers and administrators for continuing to support and encourage me through this new endeavor. Most importantly, he would like to thank his wife Bailey for always pushing me to be a better person.

“I think it is important for new teachers to understand we are not the Michael Jordan of teaching. We are going to have struggles, challenges, and failures. It is crucial that we continue to ask for help, learn, and give ourselves some grace.”

– Damion

CAST Friend of Science
Heather Hubbard has been the Statewide Education Coordinator for Colorado Parks and Wildlife for the past 4 years. In this role, she has had the opportunity to support the amazing work teachers across Colorado do for their students by providing professional learning, resource development, and educational programming to help connect students to the outdoors. From the Schools and Outdoor Learning Environments (SOLE) program, developing curriculum and activities for classroom use, and the award winning Wild Classroom video series, Heather’s passion is to bring nature and the outdoors into the classroom for relevant and engaging standards-aligned lessons. Prior to her role with CPW, Heather was a classroom teacher and district content specialist for 14 years.

In her role, she has developed a variety of resources that help teachers connect to their students’ interests. Resource highlights include videos showing the tarantula migration and modified lesson plans from the Project Wild curriculum casings Colorado issues and impacts such as migration barriers along Highway 9.

Heather has also been a part of developing several new statewide workshops for teachers on how to use CPW materials with Anchoring Phenomena. All of the resources support the new Colorado Academic Standards for Science. As Heather and her team at CPW create resources, they want teachers to know that they are not alone and that CPW is here to support teachers of our state.

Distinguished Service in Science
Kellie Land has been teaching science at Carbondale Middle School for over 20 years. She has been a coach, grade level team leader, outdoor education leader, a mentor to new teachers, and is a member of the District Middle School Science Leadership Team. She is dedicated to her middle school students and is always looking for the best ways to support them. She is creative and wants to get her students outside into the community as often as possible. Kellie specifically works hard to support her Multi Language Learning students in her science class. Middle school can be a difficult time, but Ms. Land works to stay up to date and implement new ideas each day in her classroom. Kellie’s passion is to get students learning outside whether it is biking to the nearest river or conducting water ecology on field trips.
In Memory
Ann Elizabeth Ratcliffe, 78, died suddenly at Winter Growth Assisted Living in Columbia, MD, on September 20, 2022. Her education and teaching abroad built her skills in teaching science, pottery and photography. In addition to her science teaching, she directed theatrical productions at the school. After returning to the United States, she was research associate, a lecturer, and coordinator of the general chemistry laboratories. She was also the author of three editions of a study guide for The Extraordinary Chemistry of Ordinary Things by Carl Snyder. In 1995 Ann moved to Greeley, CO, to manage a high school chemistry curriculum project at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). During the next 15 years she also taught courses in chemistry, physical science, lab and classroom safety, and chemistry teaching methods. Seven of these courses she developed herself. In 2008, she received the CAST College Science Award. She was also nominated that year for the outstanding college science teacher of the year in Colorado. Throughout her career, Ann made dozens of presentations, published numerous articles in professional journals, and made a lasting impact on the science community. Her dedication to science is a legacy she leaves for our future.

Valuable Service as CAST Board Member

Sandy Lamb
Secretary 2013 - 2022

Sandy Smith
Treasurer 2018-2022

DeLene Hoffner
President 2014-2015
Region 2 Elem. Director 2017-2022
Awards 2013 - present

Colorado Outstanding Biology Teaching Award
Jennie Edgar is a science teacher at Eaglecrest High School in Aurora, CO, where teach AP Biology, Physics, and Biotechnology as well as serving as an advisor for Science National Honor Society and HOSA. She loves science, and feels luck to teach if, learning with and from her students at Eaglecrest High School in Aurora, Colorado. Additionally, Jennie is an AP reader of both AP Environmental Science and Biology exams, a consultant for AP Biology and a National Board Certified teacher in Biology. She honed her passion for science at the University of Michigan and earned her Master’s in Science Education at Montana State University. She is currently finishing a second Master’s in Biological Sciences from the University of Northern Colorado. Jennie has served as a PST fellow for the DOE’s Office of Science, a PLT facilitator, and a curriculum consultant. She finds teaching rewarding because she is constantly learning and adapting, not only to the changing way we teach content, but also how to engage and relate to my students. Jennie says “The best way to learn science is to do science. My goal in biology education is to help guide students toward the learning needed to make them the leaders in their lives and community and to open doors to important careers in science.”

AACT Chemistry Teacher of the Year
Ryan is humbled and honored to be named the 2022 AACT Teacher of the Year (a national award) and is thankful to have discovered this amazing organization as a student-teacher 10 years ago. Ryan is a chemistry educator at Thomas B. Doherty High School in District 11 in Colorado Springs. He also teaches general and organic chemistry at Pike Peak Community College. He is passionate about combining his love for chemistry education with experiential learning. Ryan has also been involved as a state leader in science as President of the Colorado Association of Science Teachers. Each year, AACT, American Association of Chemistry Teachers, recognizes K-12 educators with the Teacher of the Year award. Through their pedagogy, dedication, skills, and accomplishments, these teachers make outstanding contributions to the chemistry teaching profession and AACT.

Learn more about Ryan in his Member Spotlight (teachchemistry.org/news/aaact-member-spotlight-ryan-johnson).
Awards continued

Colorado Finalist for the Presidential Award of Excellence in Science Teaching

Allison LeWarne has worked for Moffat County School District for the past 20 years. She started in Special Education then moved to the general education classroom. Her background in Special Education has given her the tools to meet the needs of all students. In 2017 she became a STEM teacher. She teaches all the Next Generation Science Standards K-5 at Sunset Elementary in Craig. Her students succeed through project-based learning, solving problems, and the engineering design process. In 2018 Allison was instrumental in implementing a new STEM program for the district called Project Lead the Way. Mrs. LeWarne’s PLTW program has been recognized as a “Distinct School” in 2020, 2021, and 2022. In addition, Allison has implemented many programs for the school including; school wide Science days, a Community Bee Garden, a hydroponic garden, a recycling program, a robotics team, and co-founded the first robotics league in the county. She is a SEED PAC teacher leader, bringing continuing education opportunities to her building. Allison LeWarne has a BA from the University of Northern Colorado, Special Education Certificate through Western State University, and a Masters of Science degree from Walden University.

Colorado Finalist for the Presidential Award of Excellence in Science Teaching

Autumn Rivera is currently a sixth-grade science teacher at Glenwood Springs Middle School in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, and also an adjunct professor at Colorado Mountain College in the Education Department. During her more than seventeen years as an educator, she has worked with students from elementary to postgraduate levels. Rivera holds both a Bachelors of Arts in Biology and a Masters of Arts in Teaching Secondary Science from Colorado College; and a Masters in Educational Leadership from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. She is a member of the Colorado Science Conference Planning Committee and is the President Elect for the Colorado Association of Science Teachers. She has presented a variety of professional development courses including at the Roaring Fork EdTech Summit and the Colorado Science Conference. Rivera is the middle school science lead for her school district. She was named the 2022 Colorado Teacher of the year, a Finalist for National Teacher of the Year, and a Golden Apple of Excellence in Teaching Awardee.

In addition to her work in the field of science, Rivera holds other leadership roles. She serves on the Roaring Fork School District Interest Based Bargaining Committee and advocates for her fellow teachers. Rivera believes in the importance of diversity and representation in the classroom and encourages her students to make a change now instead of waiting for the future. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, traveling, reading, volunteering, and spending quality time with people she loves. Website: www.autumnrivera.com

Congratulations to all of our award recipients!