

Lancaster Local Recognized for Decades of Environmental Education Leadership

Brenda Metcalf received the most prestigious award for environmental educators in North America

[Lancaster, OH, November 12, 2019] Brenda Metcalf's career as an environmental educator began in 1991 when she graduated from Bowling Green State University. 28 years later, the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) honored her with the Walter E. Jeske Award, the most prestigious award for environmental educators in North America.

Metcalf became the Executive Director of the Environmental Education Council of Ohio in 2003. In that role, she empowers educators throughout Ohio and places equity and inclusion at the forefront of her work by creating a welcoming environment for all, facilitating community events and supporting educators from across the state to advance environmental education.

"I am standing here because of the many, many people that came before me in Ohio," said Metcalf when accepting her award.

On the national level, Metcalf serves on the Affiliate Steering Committee and NAAEE's Advisory Council, where she has influenced nature-based, early childhood learning, global civic engagement projects and youth leadership programs. In the field, she is known for her willingness to share a piece of candy, some popcorn or a hug with anyone she meets.

The Walter E. Jeske Award was created in honor of Walt Jeske, former Chief of the Education and Publications Unit with the US Soil Conservation Service, who served on NAAEE's Board of Directors for many years and was an outstanding educator and mentor until his death in 1981. The award's prestige derives from its history and rigorous qualifications, including working in environmental education for over 15 years, giving service to NAAEE and making significant leadership contributions to the field beyond salaried duties.

"Brenda Metcalf is a natural leader who has shown an unwavering dedication to our field for more than two decades," said Judy Braus, Executive Director for NAAEE. "Her impact has not only been felt throughout Ohio, but across North American and beyond. And on top of her many accomplishments, Brenda exhibits the good will, thoughtfulness and great sense of humor that makes everyone want to work with her. She's truly a gem in our field."

The award was presented at NAAEE's 48th Annual Conference in Lexington, KY along with 10 other awards that recognize both organizational and individual leaders in the field of environmental education.

About NAAEE

For nearly five decades, the North American Association for Environmental Education has led efforts to use the power of education to advance environmental literacy and civic engagement and create a more equitable and sustainable future. NAAEE supports a network of more than 20,000 educators and 56 state, regional and provincial affiliate organizations working in environmental education in more than 30 countries.

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