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Idaho Teacher Honored with Dual Awards in Environmental Education

(BOISE) – An Idaho teacher has been recognized for her commitment to high quality instruction in environmental science and geography with two prestigious awards.

Misha Smith, a 6th grade teacher at Hawthorne Elementary in Boise, will be honored with the Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators (PIAEE) and will be recognized as a member of the Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship Cohort. Both awards highlight a commitment to providing the best in innovative classroom instruction.

The PIAEE award was established by the 1990 National Environmental Education Act and seeks to recognize, support and bring public attention to the outstanding environmental projects undertaken by teachers who go above and beyond textbook instruction to incorporate methods and materials that utilize creative experiences and enrich in K-12 education. The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), in partnership with the EPA, administers the award.

“I am so proud to represent Idaho and the Northwest Region 10 with this award,” Smith said of the PIAEE award. “I’m excited to use the award money to further my professional development in the area of environmental education, and the money given to my school will go towards supporting environmental education projects and field trips.”

The Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship, a partnership through National Geographic and Lindblad Expeditions, recognizes educators who have committed to providing the highest quality in geographic education. 2023 Fellows will embark on expeditions around the world, including Antarctica, the [Galápagos Islands](#), [Australia’s Wild Northwest Kimberley](#) region, the [Arctic](#) and beyond on board the Lindblad Expeditions’ state-of-the-art expedition vessels to enhance their geographic knowledge with hands-on, field-based experiences that they will bring back to their classrooms, communities and professional networks.

Smith says the selection is both an honor and a world-class opportunity to bring the world directly to her classroom.

“My expedition as a Grosvenor Teacher Fellow will take me on a voyage around the southern tip of South America where I will be learning from National Geographic photographers and

Lindblad Expedition naturalists to bring a piece of the world back to my classroom,” said Smith. “I chose Patagonia as my destination to bring to life the 6th grade social studies curriculum of learning about the geography and culture of Latin America, and to connect our students with our science units on climate and ecosystem.”

She says she is eager to share what she learns with teachers and students across the state of Idaho through her connections with the Idaho Environmental Education Association.

“Ultimately, I hope to help my students and others to understand the interconnectedness of humans and nature and to foster an explorer mindset.”

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Attached: Photo of Misha Smith