

54th Annual Flint Area Science Fair
“Teacher of Year 2010”
Elaine Mackey
Holly Academy



The Flint Area Science Fair Board of Directors congratulates Elaine Mackey, Science Teacher at Holly Academy, as the 2010 Teacher of the Year. The Teacher of the Year award includes a certificate, a plaque and \$250. A panel of Board members and the prior year recipient selects the Teacher of the Year from among those nominated by their peers, parents and students. The award recognizes a science teacher who displays a remarkable ability to empower and excite student interest in science.

Elaine Mackey has taught science at Holly Academy for seven years including both middle and upper elementary science, and is currently teaching all of the 4th and 5th grade classes. Holly Academy has dedicated science teachers for all grades K-8, and students have science class every day.

Mrs. Mackey earned her Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife management from the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, School of Natural Resources, and her Teaching Certificate from U of M Flint.

“I have a passion for teaching science; students want to know how and why things work and that is the part I enjoy helping them discover. My fellow science teachers and I have volunteered time to running a gardening club at Holly Academy the past two summers. Last year we donated the produce grown to a local food bank.” This year Elaine started a Science Fair Club that met once a week from January through February, to give interested students extra mentoring time. All of the students in fourth, sixth, and eighth grades complete science fair projects and are encouraged to attend The Flint Area Fair.

“I think it is important for schools to hold science fairs and require students to participate. Unfortunately, life is busy and unless science projects are part of the curriculum they will not be done.”

“Students who get to choose their own topic and design an experiment to answer a question are in control of something completely their own. Everything else in their school life is dictated to them: you must study this, you must measure that they are told. This is one of the few times they have the power to make decisions, plan, and problem solve a topic of their choice and they end up incredibly proud of their accomplishment.”

“Science has to be experienced; you have to get the kids hands’ dirty. Science is almost like a foreign language. There is an abundance of vocabulary and reading about concepts that students have to work through, but if the kids don’t get to touch it, feel it, and play with it a bit – they won’t retain any of the information. They need to make connections between the concepts they are learning and their real life. If you study soil, have them dig up a sample of their backyard and bring it to class to look at. Wire up some simple circuits, test different materials to see which ones conduct electricity. Walk outside and see what’s living in the habitat around your school, check it at different times of year and see how it changes. We need to convince all students that science is connected to everything!”

A student who nominated Elaine for Teacher of Year said “Mrs. Mackey has been planning our school science fair every year. At our school you are only required to do science fair in 4th, 6th and 8th. But she made science so much fun I decided to do it for fun.”

Elaine is married “to a wonderful man who has put up with some odd experiences over the years as I prepared for class. The smelliest was cooking hay and lettuce to make a nutrient solution to feed pond microbes long enough to see how their population numbers changed over the course of a week. She has four daughters; one attends Michigan Tech and three in elementary school. She is an avid reader, and enjoys playing volleyball and gardening.

Congratulations Elaine Mackey, Flint Area Science Fair 2010 Teacher of the Year.