

2022 TAA Teacher HEROES



January Nita Smith
February Betsy Carmichael
March Christine Bock
May Courtney Juneau

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Nita Smith - *January Teacher Hero*
Music Teacher
Isaiah Creswell Middle School
Nashville, Tennessee

Nita Smith serves as the choral music and piano instructor at Isaiah Creswell Middle School for the Arts in Metro Nashville Public Schools. Nita has developed a singular program in music thanks to her respect for and rapport with her students. She is creative, energetic, and loves her work. She was selected as a 2020 CMA Foundation Music Teacher of Excellence. Other awards include the Blue Ribbon Teacher Award (2019) and the Carol Crittenden Arts Advocate of the Year Award (2020). She has also received grants from VH1 Save the Music (2017) and Music and the Brain Piano (2018). Most recently, several of her students had solos in the Emmy Award-winning song “We Are Nashville,” a collaborative virtual performance with Metro Nashville Public Schools choral programs and the Nashville Symphony Orchestra. Nita is also the artistic associate and senior/co-director of the MET Singers Community Honor Choir, and serves as a curriculum consultant for the National Museum of African American Music and the Country Music Hall of Fame, Songwriting 101 program. She has published music related magazine articles and is a member of numerous professional organizations. Nita has attended the Tennessee Arts Academy and served as a music facilitator. In addition to being a gifted teacher, Nita Smith is also a delightful human being. She is talented and committed. The success of her work shines through her students.



Betsy Carmichael - *February Teacher Hero*
Visual Art Teacher
Baylor School
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Betsy Carmichael has worked as an art instructor in independent school settings for over thirty-five years, inspiring hundreds of young artists and nurturing their skills, developing their talents, and encouraging their artistic passions. When she is not leading trips with students or teaching during the school year, Carmichael takes classes herself on traditional methods in painting from contemporary artists. This keeps her engagement with the craft of teaching fresh and her skill level updated with current techniques, technology, and perspectives, bringing new vigor to the classroom. Ms. Carmichael was nominated by her former student and current colleague, Heath Montgomery. Here is a portion of his nomination letter:

“Betsy was my high school art teacher, and she has been my beloved colleague for ten years. Her guidance inspired me to attend college for art and formed the desire in me to pass on the love of craft to future generations. She is a gift to our school and is a teacher that inspires all that she meets to achieve more by learning to learn.” ...Heath Montgomery

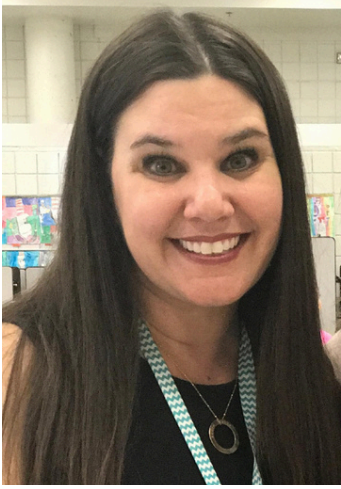


Christine Bock - *March Teacher Hero*
Music Teacher
Cedar Bluff Elementary School
Knoxville, Tennessee

Music teacher Christine Bock, a Tennessee Arts Academy regular, has been inspiring her students and colleagues for the last twenty-three years at Cedar Bluff Elementary School. She has been a participant and supporter of TAA her entire career as a music educator.

Bock has training in Orff-Schulwerk, Kodály, and Dalcroze methodologies, and found additional inspiration through the National Symposium on Multicultural Music which was created by her mentor, Dr. Marvelene Moore. Bock has served as the president of the East Tennessee General Music Education Association and has been the General Music Chair for the Tennessee Music Education Association. Her colleagues have voted her Teacher of the Year twice, and she placed third in Knox County in that competition. For eight years, Bock has directed an after-school choir, The Singing Eagles, and she has also served as the guest director of the Knox County Elementary Honor Choir. She has presented professional development sessions for Knox and Sevier County Schools, the Southern Appalachian Orff-Schulwerk Association, and the Tennessee Music Education Association.

In the community, Bock is an active member of the Knoxville Area Dulcimer Club, and teaches the novice level classes. Her involvement in the club inspired her to write grants for dulcimers for her school and create an after-school dulcimer club for her students. She regularly hosts student teachers and field experience students from The University of Tennessee and Carson Newman University. Christine Bock is dedicated to be an advocate for the future of fine arts in her school, community, and beyond.



Courtney Juneau - *May Teacher Hero*
Visual Art Teacher
Arlington Elementary School
Arlington, Tennessee

An art educator for twenty years, Courtney Juneau currently teaches art at Arlington Elementary School in Arlington, Tennessee, where she has developed numerous unique programs to help promote the visual arts. She and a teacher colleague annually host an art camp to help build excitement and interest among their students. Beyond that, each spring Courtney and her partner teacher host an art exhibit featuring artwork from every student in the school. Courtney constantly remains busy judging the yearly talent show and coordinating numerous fundraisers. She loves teaching art and it is evident in everything she does. Her principal, Tonya Hawkins, nominated Courtney to be a TAA Teacher Hero and here is what she had to say:

"Mrs. Juneau is a ray of sunshine in our building. She has a true passion for the arts and for the students she serves. She teaches art to students in grades K-5; while also teaching Social Emotional Learning to some students in grades 3-5. In addition, Mrs. Juneau serves as the school's yearbook coordinator, where she strives to make sure all students and staff are included. Perhaps one of her most self-less roles includes managing our school's PTA Facebook page. This resource is vital to communication with our parents and community. Most importantly, Mrs. Juneau highlights our students and the incredible opportunities they have to shine. We consider ourselves quite fortunate to have Mrs. Juneau as part of our AES family. She is a wonderful example of the AES BEST!"

Tonya Hawkins, Principal
Arlington Elementary School
Arlington, Tennessee