FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Alabama Skilled Trades Teacher Team Among Finalists for 2020 Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize

$1 Million in Cash Prizes to be Awarded in October

Montgomery, Ala. – A team of Daphne, Alabama skilled trades teachers, are among 50 educators and teacher teams from across the country, who have been officially named finalists for the 2020 Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence.

Alabama teachers Betsy Anderton and Luke Stewart, who teach agriscience education at Daphne High School, were chosen by an independent panel of national judges. Their school program is now in the running for a share of the $1 million cash award!

A field of more than 600 highly skilled teachers applied this year, from across the country.

The finalists – some competing as individuals and some as teacher teams – hail from 23 states. These top educators specialize in exciting trades areas including manufacturing, welding, construction, automotive, agriculture mechanics and technical theater.

See the full list of national finalists at: https://harborfreighttoolsforschools.org/what-we-do/prize-for-teaching-excellence/2020-prize/

“Trades teachers are truly unsung heroes, and our prize seeks to show everyone how powerful these classes can be,” said Danny Corwin, executive director of Harbor Freight Tools for Schools. “Skilled trades education has enormous potential to offer students pathways to multiple postsecondary opportunities, and these are the teachers who are providing them with the knowledge, skills and inspiration year after year.”

Anderton and Stewart team-teach agriscience education at Daphne High School. Anderton earned a doctorate in instructional design from the University of South Alabama and began teaching to pass hands-on skills to the next generation, including her three daughters. Stewart earned two bachelor’s degrees from Auburn University and a master’s degree in agriscience education from Murray State University.

Together, these top Alabama teachers promote classroom collaboration, where students build a full playhouse from the ground-up each year and refurbish old equipment. Students also assisted others this year by installing a new marine science aquaponic system, using drone technology to help school landscaping classes in developing planting schedules and plans, built lockers for the girls’ locker room, and crafted props for local theater and arts productions.

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This past year, more than 150 of Anderton and Stewart’s students earned an industry credential. In a recent poll of their graduates, approximately 90 percent have found employment that draws on the skills they learned in the school agriculture program.

The 2020 Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence finalists now advance to a second round of competition, where they will be asked to respond to online expert-led video learning modules designed to solicit their insights and creative ideas about teaching practices. The contenders will be asked how ideas from the modules might be used to inspire students to achieve excellence in the skilled trades.

Two rounds of judging, each by separate independent panels of reviewers, will narrow the field to 18 winners, and finally award three of these educators Grand Prizes. All winners will be announced in late October. The 18 winners will also split $1 million in prizes.

Grand Prize winners will each receive $100,000, with $70,000 going to their public high school skilled trades program and $30,000 to the individual skilled trades teacher or teacher team behind the winning program. The 15 additional winners will each be awarded $50,000, with $35,000 going to their public high school program and $15,000 to the teacher or team.

The Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence was started in 2017 by Eric Smidt, founder of this national tool retailer.

This award recognizes outstanding instruction in skilled trade areas in U.S. public high schools and the wonderful teachers who inspire students to prepare for a great life after graduation.

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