

2021 PAEE Award Winners



KEYSTONE AWARD

Mike Weilbacher

Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education

The executive director of the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education in Philadelphia since 2011, Mike is an environmental educator with 40 years' experience teaching through lectures, walks, writings, and even theater and radio. Since 1982, he has traveled the country performing participatory environmental theater, presenting at nature centers, community festivals, schools, and museums across the state, and has been featured at innumerable EE conferences, including PAEE; many of his skits have been adopted at centers across the country. He is well-known to Philadelphia radio listeners as "Mike the All-Natural Science Guy" on WXPN's children's show "Kid's Corner," has written weekly columns on nature and the environment for local newspapers for almost 30 years, and is currently working on his very first book, Wild Philadelphia.



"One of Mike's most inspiring qualities is his willingness to listen to his colleagues and fellow environmental advocates and to look at environmental education through many different lenses. By encouraging open discussion and regular feedback from experienced people of a myriad of backgrounds, he broadens the scope of environmental education to reach as many different groups as possible. He can balance the needs of a large organization with many varied departments and encourages a cohesive and cooperative approach." - Schuylkill Center Staff Member

GOVERNMENT PARTNER AWARD

Amy Miller

Allegheny County Conservation District

Amy Miller has worked at the Allegheny County Conservation District as the Watershed Specialist for over 10 years. Amy started her path into the watershed world at Clarion University, where she received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in biology/environmental science. While at Clarion, she worked with the Mill Creek Coalition monitoring abandoned mine drainage sites in the Mill Creek Watershed.

As Watershed Specialist, Amy provides technical assistance and support to watershed partners across the region. She helps to obtain funding and manage watershed restoration projects, monitors streams, and helps to organize the county's Envirothon. Community engagement is big part of her job at the District where she



conducts public outreach on various topics related to streams and watershed ecology. In addition, she helps with student programming at both the Fern Hollow Nature Center and Creek Connections. These opportunities allow her to show students of all ages the awesomeness of the outside world. They have also taught her a lot about teaching by working with some wonderful educators. She hopes to continue learning and sharing her outdoor experiences with others.

OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR AWARD

Stacey Widenhofer Fern Hollow Nature Center

Stacey started her path in the Environmental Education field during her college internship at Moraine State Park with Moraine Preservation Fund. She helped to design environmental education programs for the organization - both on land and on their floating classroom. They also had an Osprey Reintroduction Program and the educational component had a huge influence in the trajectory of her career.

Stacey has been working at Fern Hollow Nature Center for the last 12 years. She has developed, designed and implemented a program specifically for preschool aged students called Little Explorers. It is a program all about kindness, exploration, nature art and nature play.

"All of this work cannot be done without all of the amazing mentors that guide, support and encourage us along the way. and A very special thank you to all of the educators that have had faith in me - Ruth Roperti, Beth McMaster, April Claus and all of the wonderful staff, volunteers and teachers I have worked with at Fern Hollow Nature Center. They are the ones that inspire me to bring these ideas to life."



OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AWARD



Ferreri, Lauren



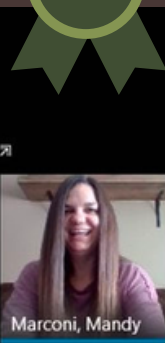
Lynch, Daniel



Monfort, Joseph



Sanford, Jordan



Marconi, Mandy

Wildlife on WiFi Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Pennsylvania Game Commission's Wildlife on WiFi (WoW) at home and virtual learning platform, was designed and launched to ensure the agency continued meeting its strategic objective of serving the Pennsylvania public and providing educational services during the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and state school closures. WoW provides educators, students, parents, and high-risk health communities, as well as general audiences, with home-based conservation and wildlife science education activities and lessons, virtual field trips and events, and social media games.

This innovative virtual approach to environmental education has served as a model for wildlife and environmental education. The Wildlife on WiFi platform and user-friendly website has registered more than 50,000 engagements including 1,000 Pennsylvania students who have participated in a WoW virtual lesson. The program has received local, state, and national attention. During the launch, WoW was co-promoted on social media by 25 Pennsylvania state senators and representatives and ~100 state organizations. What started as a campaign has become so popular that the Game Commission has made it a permanent program and is exploring opportunities, including a "Connecting Classrooms" migratory bird program between schools in Canada and Pennsylvania.

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Carrie Lane Allegheny County Library Association

Carrie Lane is the Youth Services Coordinator at the Allegheny County Library Association (ACLA). In this position, she develops partnerships, creates programming, plans professional development, and provides consultation with the 46 county libraries, 72 locations. Prior to joining the team at ACLA, Carrie was the director of the North Versailles Public Library and the Teen Librarian/Marketing and Fundraising Coordinator at Western Allegheny Community Library. She is a graduate of La Roche College and Kent State University.

"It is an honor to receive this award and I hope that more families are learning about nearby nature and exploring local greenspaces because of these backpacks circulating at county libraries. In my personal life, I've realized through this partnership the importance of spending time in nature and have spent the last year hiking with my child."



DAISY S. KLINEDINST MEMORIAL AWARD

Brandon McCracken Tookany / Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership

Brandon McCracken has been an Environmental Educator with Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership since 2019, when he helped lead a series of bilingual bird walks in parks across Philadelphia. Since then he has remained involved with development and presentation of English+Spanish programs, most notably the "Bring Us Along! / ¡Tráenos Contigo!" virtual nature tours in 2020. Brandon takes pride in being part of programs that invite Spanish-speaking neighbors to learn more about local parks and ecology. Besides his involvement with TTF, Brandon also works as a Montgomery County Park Ranger.

"I am very grateful to receive this award, many thanks to PAEE for their consideration! My work with TTF Watershed Partnership would not be possible without the efforts of the hard-working and dedicated staff, especially Ryan Neuman, Doryán de Angel, and Julie Slavet."

