



**2021**

**National**

**Air Force Association/Rolls Royce**

**Aerospace/STEM**

**Teachers of the Year**

**Cultivating Tomorrow's  
Leaders with Aerospace  
and STEM Education**

## **Megan Tucker: 2021 National AFA/Rolls Royce Aerospace/STEM Teacher of the Year**

K-5<sup>th</sup> grade STEAM Specialist; Aerospace, Technology, and Gifted Teacher; Dean of Curriculum

### **[Hillsboro Charter Academy](#)**

37110 Charles Town Pike  
Hillsboro, VA 20132

***Hillsboro Charter Academy President, Board of Directors (acts as Superintendent of the School)***

Gwen Wilf

***Hillsboro Charter Academy Principal***

Paul Vickers

**Nominated by AFA's VA-433 General Charles A. Gabriel Chapter**

Chapter President, Mike Winters

State President, Linda McMahon

State VP/AE, Mark Douglas

Megan Tucker is a 17-year veteran teacher who has moved from Florida, to California, to Virginia following her husband's USAF military career. At each stop along the way, she made a huge impact on the educational environment where she taught and connected with her local AFA chapter at each location. At her present school, Hillsboro Charter Academy, she is implementing a plethora of STEM programs for her entire student body, in writing curriculum for national STEM organizations, in making presentations to teachers nationwide, and in seeking and receiving awards and grants for her school. She is continuously involved in her own professional development, such as the 2021 Space Camp for Educators where she met the AFA Hurlburt Chapter TOY with whom she is now collaborating to connect the two AFA chapters. (Megan pictured on left with Hurlburt Chapter TOY) Mrs. Tucker is a Space Foundation Ambassador, as well as an AIAA Teacher Ambassador, and is involved in numerous other national organizations in leadership and professional development roles. [Read full write-up HERE.](#)



\* [Short Video of Mrs. Tucker HERE](#)



Megan at 2021 [Dayton Teachers Air Camp](#)

**Ashlie Blackstone Smith:**  
**2021 2<sup>nd</sup> place National AFA/Rolls Royce Aerospace/STEM Teacher of the Year**

8<sup>th</sup> grade Physical Science teacher

[Cranbrook Kingswood Middle School for Girls](#)

39221 Woodward Ave.

Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303

*Cranbrook Kingwood Middle School for Girls, Head of School*

Mrs. Stacy Rivard

**Nominated by AFA's MI-179 Mount Clemens "Selfridge" Chapter**

Chapter & State President, and State VP/AE, John "Odie" Slocum

Chapter VP/AE, Suzanne Rutkowski

Ashlie Blackstone Smith is a 20-year veteran teacher who has worked at Cranbrook Kingwood Middle School for Girls in Michigan for the last 18 years as an 8th-grade physical science teacher. She has received local and national attention for her work in space science instruction, use of technology in the classroom, and focus on women in science and engineering. Highlights include receiving the Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award presented by NASA, Astronaut Memorial Foundation and Space Foundation; ISS US National Laboratory Outstanding Teacher of the Year; and Cubes in Space Teacher of the Year. [Read full write-up HERE.](#)



Ashlie at 2021 [Dayton Teachers Air Camp](#)



\* [Video of Mrs. Blackstone Smith HERE](#)

**Jennifer Donais:**  
**2021 3<sup>rd</sup> place National AFA/Rolls Royce Aerospace/STEM Teacher of the Year**

K-8<sup>th</sup> grade math and STEM coach

**[Amesbury Middle School](#)**

220 Main St  
Amesbury, MA 01913

***Amesbury Middle School, Principal***

Mr. Brian Gill

**Nominated by AFA's MA- 178 Paul Revere Chapter**

Chapter President, David M. "Pilgrim" DeNofrio, Col, USAF (Ret) PhD  
Chapter VP/AE, Shelley Rosenbaum Lipman

State President, Joseph P. Bisognano

State VP/AE, Maryanne Thompson

Jennifer Donais is a 13-year teaching veteran who is in her second year as K-8<sup>th</sup> grade math and STEM coach at Amesbury Middle School in Massachusetts. She quickly learned that for her students to acquire the 21st Century skills needed to solve authentic world problems, she had to engage them in solving real-world problems. Students have consistently told her about their attitude change toward math, with one student expressing that "Ms. Donais awakened a great love for math in me."

As she progressed through her teaching career, she became involved in teacher workshops and conferences where she found she had a keen interest in aerospace-related topics as a manner to teach relevance in math and science to students. She also found that by sharing her experiences with other teachers at these conferences, her skills improved in peer teacher instruction and inspiring teachers to try hands-on learning with special Project-based Learning (PBL) programs. She now works not only with the students in her school, but with the teachers there, helping them plan and implement innovative ways to teach math and science through a variety of STEM programs. She is currently the math and science coach at her school where her school system superintendent applauds her work with her school, her school district, nationally, and even internationally.

**[Read full write-up HERE.](#)**

\* **[Video of Mrs. Donais HERE](#)**



Jenn at 2021 [Dayton Teachers Air Camp](#)