



2024 National Award Winners

CAP's K-6th grade [Aerospace Connections in Education \(ACE\) program](#) began in 2007 as the Jr Cadet program. In 2008, the program name was changed to ACE and the sixth grade curriculum began being used in grades 6-8. Since the program's inception, over 638,000 students have been impacted. During the 2023-2024 AY alone, over 101K students were involved! Each year, those who are nominated for their stellar ACE work are considered for awards. Awards are included for the [ACE Plus Adopt program](#) as a component of the ACE program which connects CAP squadron as mentors for grades 5-8. The names found below are the award winners for 2024. Each award recipient will receive an award plaque and a grant award courtesy of the [Air & Space Forces Association Education Council](#).

Click on each blue award, below, for each winner's story!

[National ACE School of the Year: Grayhawk Elementary School](#)
[National ACE Coordinator of the Year: Grayhawk's Michelle Lindstrom](#)

~ Principal, Eli Hubbell, Scottsdale, AZ

Site of the 2024-2025 National ACE Liftoff Event on Oct 15, 2024!

[National ACE Teacher of the Year: Thomas Ellis, 5-8th Grade Science Teacher](#)
Palm Beach Day Academy, Palm Beach, FL

[National ACE Collaborative Teacher of the Year: Caitlin Hayes, STEM Teacher](#)
St. John the Apostle Catholic School, Virginia Beach, VA

[National ACE Resource Teacher of the Year: Kayla Kill](#)
LeMay Elementary School, Bellevue, NE

[TWO National ACE Students of the Year:](#)

[Mason Grinder, 6th Grade](#)

Macon County R-IV School, New Cambria, MO ~ Dawn Johnson, Teacher

[Kyle Adams, 6th Grade](#)

Palm Beach Day Academy, Palm Beach, FL ~ Thomas Ellis, Teacher

[National ACE Plus Adopt Collaborative Squadron and School Teams of the Year:](#)
[GLR-MI-059 Adrian Composite Squadron & Prairie Elementary School and](#)
[SER-FL-049 Ormond Beach Composite Squadron & Ormond Beach Middle School](#)
Adrian, Michigan, and Ormond Beach, Florida

How are ACE awards determined?

Nominations are accepted for the major ACE awards of National Teacher, School, and Student of the Year for the Aerospace Connections in Education (ACE) program.

For other ACE awards selected, to include the collaborative ACE Plus team award, the CAP National HQ ACE team in Montgomery, AL, identifies schools, teachers, and/or squadrons having gone above and beyond; uniquely standing out via their photos sent to the HQ team and their social media posts which tagged @CAPaerospace.

For all ACE participants for the upcoming 2024-2025 Academic Year, keep the ACE team informed of all being done with ACE students and remember to tag @CAPaerospace on any social media posts about your CAP work so that YOUR work will be noticed!

Points of Pride for 2023-2024

Exceeding the goal of 100,000 “faces of ACE” across the nation was the highest achievement of the year. Reaching 101, 384 students with 658 teachers from 548 schools in 48 states + Europe (DoD) was a significant milestone. (See ACE list by state [HERE.](#))

In addition to a variety of school types, there were Boys and Girls Clubs, Scout groups, Women in Aviation International (WAI) groups, after-school programs, museums, libraries, and summer camps all using the ACE program. Proudly, CAP had a large group of ACE Plus teams this year, as well.

- 98% educators view ACE as fitting well with standards; supporting STEM education; a valuable use of time; and a positive influence on behavior and learning.
- 78% of ACE schools are Title 1 Schools, therefore allowing CAP to reach a broad range of ethnicities and socio-economic demographics.

The new [ACE Plus: Squadron-Classroom Adopt program](#) expanded in its fourth year to have CAP squadrons connect with teachers to help teach the ACE lessons, share information about the CAP cadet program, coordinate field trips, and teach about a variety of STEM careers. Included in this year’s ACE Plus Adopt program was 8 Regions, 24 wings, 30 squadrons, 38 teachers, and 2,786 students. (See the outstanding ACE Plus award winners above.)

Through the Years

Since 2007 inception: over 638,000 ACE students in 50 states + DC & PR + Europe (DoD)

- ***The [Air & Space Forces Association](#) has been a steadfast partner, providing shirts and award grants. CAP appreciates their continued support.***
- To get a perspective of the overall ACE program and history, see the 16-year milestone and 2024 ACE awards story in CAP.NEWS, [HERE.](#) (July 2024)



2024 National ACE Resource Teacher of the Year:
Kayla Kill
LeMay Elementary School, Bellevue, NE

Kayla Kill has brought a new spark of interest for the students of LeMay Elementary School via the CAP ACE program. As the resource teacher at the school, Kill integrates the special ACE lessons for kindergarten and third grade students who have increased their aerospace knowledge up to 23% from the pretest to the post test.

From the school's nomination:

“The ACE program has been a great addition to our school. We have kindergarten and 3rd grade implementing the lessons that are provided and prepped by the special education teacher at the school. We have a STEM room that has been put in place in our school and having the ACE lessons to use has been such an amazing bonus to use for our classes. We have incorporated drones in our STEM room and have had our local squadrons from the base come support with them. They have taught a group of students the safety of drones, the job fields in which we use drones, and discussed how to use the map on fly zones in our area.

“One of our big events we do in the spring is called UP, UP, and Away. We have students work in teams and make hot air balloons out of tissue paper and glue. We use the ACE lessons leading up to the event to teach our students about flight and Bernoulli's Principle. The lessons that we have provided from the ACE program align with this event very well. This event is held at our local Lied Center, and we invite parents and local news stations to come watch our big lift off during the day.

“Mrs. Kill has started the lessons for her small resource groups and has added our kindergarten and 3rd grade teachers involved to support the lessons. We truly appreciate everything that the ACE program has given us and allowing us to expand in our STEM projects.”

***CONGRATULATIONS, KAYLA KILL,
NATIONAL ACE RESOURCE TEACHER OF THE YEAR!***

Kayla Kill sharing ACE program aspects at a STEM conference and with students during the Up, Up, and Away Hot Air Balloon STEM event:

