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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **HIGH SCHOOL CHEMISTRY TEACHER, ELEMENTARY TEACHER WIN AWARDS**

**GAINESVILLE** – A high school chemistry teacher who uses citrus quality testing in the classroom and an elementary teacher who uses QR codes in the school garden have won Florida Agriculture in the Classroom's (FAITC) Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award for 2017.

Chemistry and agriculture biotechnology teacher Carrie Sue Edenfield of Hardee Senior High School in Hardee County is the winner of the high school and overall Florida awards. Second grade teacher Tara Dukanauskas of North Andrews Gardens Elementary in Fort Lauderdale is the winner of the elementary award.

Both teachers will receive all-expenses paid trips to the National Agriculture in the Classroom National Conference 'Show Me Agriculture' in Kansas City, MO June 20-23. As the overall Florida winner, Edenfield has been nominated for the National Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award.

"We applaud the innovative ways these teachers use agricultural concepts to teach chemistry, technology, reading, writing, math and more," said FAITC Chairwoman Tamara Wood, who serves as the Florida Citrus Mutual representative on the FAITC board of directors. "Their effective use of agricultural concepts in general education classrooms are an example for other teachers to follow."

Edenfield, a five-year teaching veteran, developed an acid/base titration lesson in which her ninth and 10<sup>th</sup> grade chemistry students test oranges for a local citrus harvester to determine whether or not the fruit is ripe enough to be picked. In addition, she uses identifying elements in fertilizer and understanding the ionic bonds in salt blocks fed to cattle to educate her students about complicated chemistry concepts using real-life agricultural situations.

Dukanauskas, a teacher for 32 years, added QR codes to her school garden to help educate teachers and students beyond her classroom about the types of plants in the garden, whether or not the plants were started from seed and how to care for these plants, among other information. The QR codes take visitors to a web page written by students.

FAITC is a Gainesville-based, non-profit organization that educates K-12 teachers and students about the importance of Florida agriculture by providing curricula, materials, grant money and elementary school reading program Florida Agriculture Literacy Day, among other programs. It is funded by sales of the agriculture specialty license plate called the 'Ag Tag.'

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