



MEDIA RELEASE

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Lowcountry Leadership Charter School’s Katie Bell named 2020-2021 Charter Institute at Erskine “Nathan Yon” Teacher of the Year

MEGGETT – Katie Bell of Lowcountry Leadership Charter School has been named the 2020-2021 Charter Institute at Erskine “Nathan Yon” Teacher of the Year. The announcement was made by Dr. Mick Zais, United States Deputy Secretary of Education, during the Institute’s virtual awards banquet on May 21.

Bell, who serves as high school Agriculture Education and Earth Science teacher, was one of six finalists for the honor. Agencies represented on the panel of judges were from the South Carolina Department of Education and the Public Charter School Alliance of South Carolina. Lowcountry Leadership serves approximately 530 students in grades K-12 and is located in Meggett, South Carolina.

“What an overwhelming moment this is,” Bell said. “I am so proud of everything we have accomplished at Lowcountry Leadership. To be named Institute Teacher of the Year is hard to put into words. I am just so excited for this honor.”

A graduate of the PACE program, Bell began her career in business before finding her true calling. She has spent four years teaching at the high school level.

In addition to her teaching duties at Lowcountry Leadership, Bell also oversees the FFA program as an advisor. She established the school’s first CTE pathway and has raised over \$40,000 for the Agriculture program. Most of class time for Mrs. Bell and her students is spent on the school’s two-acre farm where they raise animals and grow crops.

“Mrs. Bell is so valuable to Lowcountry Leadership Charter School,” said principal Brianne Hudak. “She motivates our students, she supports them, she encourages them to do their best. She does so much with hands-on experiences that tie back to life lessons.”

Lowcountry Leadership senior Maggie Sears says Bell’s impact on her goes beyond the classroom.

“She has meant so much to me not just as a teacher, but in life,” Sears said. “She inspired what I want to do in the future and what I want to study in college. Lowcountry Leadership is blessed to have a teacher like Mrs. Bell.”

Charter Institute at Erskine CEO and Superintendent Cameron Runyan was one of several Institute staff members at the school to surprise Bell with a red carpet, limousine, and check for \$1,000.

“We are ecstatic to crown Mrs. Katie Bell of Lowcountry Leadership Charter School as the Charter Institute at Erskine’s 2020-2021 Nathan Yon Teacher of the Year,” Runyan said. “Mrs. Bell epitomizes what being a great teacher is all about. She is creative, innovative, and demands excellence from her students. As she represents the Institute this year, we look forward to seeing the inspiration she will bestow on fellow CTE educators across our beautiful state.”

The Institute’s Teacher of the Year award is renamed in honor of the late Nathan Yon, who died in May 2013. Yon was the Executive Director of the former South Carolina Science Academy, and a driving force for charter schools in South Carolina. The Institute Teacher of the Year also receives an additional \$500 check donated by the Yon family.

For more information on Lowcountry Leadership Charter School and other charter schools authorized by the Charter Institute at Erskine, visit www.erskinecharters.org.

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