Charleston County SCHOOL DISTRICT excellence is our standard

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Media Release

Charleston Gaillard Center celebrates Wright as Star Teacher of the Year

Charleston, SC – The Charleston Gaillard Center announced the 2022-2023 Star Teacher of the Year, presenting Tomaroe Wright at North Charleston Elementary School with the award for her dedication to integrating the arts into her classroom on Monday, December 11, 2023.

Wright was chosen as the Gaillard STAR teacher due to her ongoing dedication to bringing her students to the arts. She planned multiple field trips to the Gaillard, taking special care to come early so that her students with learning or physical differences have the opportunity to engage with the art in their own way. Wright also planned and hosted multiple in-school workshops with Gaillard arts educators.

"All I wanted to do was give my students the opportunity to experience Art in a different way," said Wright. "Most of them think that art is just coloring and making crafts, but art can be interpreted in so many ways. I am grateful to the Charleston Gaillard Center for providing me the opportunity to introduce to my students of North Charleston Elementary the experience of art in real-life, through performing arts."

Since reopening in 2015, the Gaillard Center has served as the community's largest classroom, providing access for Lowcountry students to experience world-class artists and performances without financial barriers.

"The Gaillard Center's robust education program has worked so well thanks to teachers like Ms. Wright," said Lissa Frenkel, President & CEO of the Charleston Gaillard Center. "She truly goes above and beyond what is asked of her to give her students any and all experiences."

Through its Education & Community Program, the Gaillard has welcomed students to engage with trained teaching artists, learn through innovative programs, attend performances, and participate in school programs designed to complement the state curriculum. This programming allows students to expand their imaginations, stretch their limits, and experience live performing arts.

North Charleston Elementary School

Anita Huggins
Acting Superintendent of Schools

Jacqueline Haynes
Associate Superintendent of Acceleration Schools

Melissa Brubaker
Principal

To ensure the Gaillard Center provides access to every student, Title I Schools receive free tickets and free bus transportation to education performances. The Charleston Gaillard Education and Community Program served more than 25,000 students in 2022-2023 (72 schools from Charleston County School District alone). Since launching the education program, the Gaillard Center has spent over $200,000 in the funding nearly 1,000 school buses.

Star Teacher of the Year Award

Wright worked diligently to organize field trips to the Charleston Gaillard Center so her students would have the opportunity to experience the live performing arts.

"One show that we attended recently was Step Afrika," added Wright. "The way my students talked about their experience made my heart melt. Special thanks to Stephanie Lancaster, for always being there for me and my students. With the different accommodations we have going on, she always makes it possible for all of our students to be able to share the same experience. For her I am grateful!

Principal Melissa Brubaker said the school community is fortunate to have Wright.

"She works diligently to create an environment where all students can learn and she looks for ways to extend their learning outside of the classroom," said Brubaker. "She understands that students need real-life experiences and exposure to support the learning that takes place in the classroom."

Stephanie Lancaster, Education Manager at the Charleston Gaillard Center, said that for several years, Wright has gone above and beyond for her students, giving them access to various art experiences in and outside of the classroom.

"Ms. Wright purposefully plans immersive experiences that allow students of all abilities to gain a better understanding of the power of the arts," added Lancaster.

The Charleston Gaillard Center's Education & Community Program is made possible through the support of the Martha & John M. Rivers Performance Hall Foundation, the City of Charleston, Explore Charleston, and many institutions and grants.

Learn more about programming, impact, and education partners at gaillardcenter.org/education.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, portfolio of educational options and specialized programs delivered to the students of CCSD through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools and

programs. Rich educational opportunities for students include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military; dual credit; and many more.