

**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
FOOD AND FORESTRY**

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**Christie Puckett named 2019 Ag in the Classroom
Teacher of the Year**

MAYSVILLE – Born, raised and planted – Christie Puckett describes her lifetime of living in Maysville, Okla., this way.

“I have such a heart for the town I was born and raised in,” Christie Puckett said, “so it comes as no surprise that Maysville is where God planted me to teach for the last 34 years. It is primarily a farming town, and I love the sense of unity agriculture brings to our community.”

Puckett, who has taught at Maysville Public Schools for her entire 34-year teaching career, has been selected as the 2019 Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom Teacher of the Year. She has pursued AITC in many ways, to include attending countless workshops, tours and conferences across the state. She shared her skills with other educators at the 2016 AITC State Summer Conference as a presenter. Last year she was an AITC Teacher of the Year finalist and attended the National AITC Conference in Maine.

Although her accomplishments attest to her dedication, it all starts in the classroom. Puckett has incorporated agricultural lessons into her classes since she began teaching.

“As a beginning teacher, I was always exploring new ways to cater to the needs of my students,” she said. “I first encountered Ag in the Classroom at a workshop held at the Garvin County Fairgrounds, and I have been hooked ever since. I soon became engulfed with a deep passion for teaching ag literacy.”

This passion also led Puckett to become a 4-H leader. She says her AITC lessons always keep her students actively engaged and learning.

“The Little Red Hen is one of my very favorite lessons to teach,” she said. “I have a personal life connection to the story because my mother always read it to us and taught us to live by the moral of the story. When I teach this lesson, I put emphasis on the growth of wheat from a seed to full growth, bringing examples for students to observe.”

Puckett has taught performing arts, kindergarten, first, third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades, as well as seventh and eighth grade English. However, now she teaches fourth, fifth and sixth grade science.

“AITC lessons are perfect to use in my science classroom,” she said. “They fit right in with the state standards that my students need to master. The curriculum covers a wide variety of skills and concepts through interactive activities such as: plotting on maps, playing the Prey and Predator game, extracting DNA from a strawberry, and learning about iron in cereals.”

Outside of her own classroom, Puckett continues to incorporate AITC. The first Thursday of every month, she reads an agriculture-related book to all elementary students. The students then visit her science lab for a lesson on the book’s subject.

The past few years, she has also incorporated an “Ag Day” at Maysville Elementary School. With help from the local ag teacher, community members, former students and other guests, Puckett spends months planning the event to ensure its success.

Dr. Shelly H-Beach, Maysville Public Schools superintendent, commented on the event as well.

“This event exposes students to various agricultural-related activities, machinery, and livestock,” Dr. H-Beach said. “She included high school students in the presentations and all elementary students rotated through the stations. Each year focuses on different aspects of the agricultural field.”

Puckett said, “This year I utilized the Farm Bureau Commodity trailer, the Soybean Board, and Cheri Long with AITC for help with the stations. I also had a local community member bring her show chickens. It is always a fun time seeing the students and parents connect with other members of the community. One of the greatest gifts a student can give their educator is to demonstrate their knowledge and have the same passion to pay it forward.”

Puckett is impacting all students in her community, and it does not go unnoticed.

Dr. H-Beach said Puckett is the “ideal role model for all educators” and is “constantly striving to find interesting and motivating lessons.” She described Puckett as a “pillar in the community” and “one you can always turn to for guidance and support.”

Cheri Long, an Oklahoma AITC coordinator, said, “Christie loves agriculture and sees the importance of educating her students about agriculture and their connection. It is evident with the activities she provides for her students, like organizing the school’s Ag Day event, reading an ag book to the students every month, and bringing her kids into the lab to do agricultural activities.”

Christie Puckett will be honored at the state Capitol in Oklahoma City as part of the state’s annual Oklahoma Ag Day celebration April 2. Teachers and students from across the state will be recognized as winners of the 2019 AITC “Oklahoma Ag Adventure” contest. This celebration is open to the public and is free. Sponsors for Ag Day include the Oklahoma Beef Council, Oklahoma AgCredit, Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women, Oklahoma Soybean Board, Dairy MAX, Southwest Dairy Farmers and ODAFF.

“Agriculture touches so many aspects of our daily lives,” Puckett said. “I believe that it is critical for students to connect to the world outside the walls of our school building. This is why agriculture is at the core of my instruction. I deeply believe that the students must understand and appreciate the community in which they live. Ag in the Classroom helps me to achieve this by providing quality lessons that enhance the learning experience for my students.”

Puckett will attend the National AITC Conference June 18-21, 2019, in Little Rock, Arkansas. The 2019 Oklahoma AITC Teacher of the Year Finalists are as follows: Early Childhood, Anna Wofford from Frederick Elementary School in Frederick; Elementary, Megan Plummer from Holmes Park Elementary School in Sapulpa; Middle School, Dusti McCartney from Willard 5th and 6th Grade Center in Ada, and High School, Tammy Will from Morrison High School in Morrison. These finalists will also be attending the National AITC Conference in Arkansas. The Oklahoma AITC Teacher of the Year and the finalists are able to attend the national AITC conference because of the sponsorship of Oklahoma AgCredit.

This summer, Puckett will also be on the road with Oklahoma AITC June 4-6 touring “Ag on Route 66.” Teachers from across the state travel Oklahoma from Kellyville to El Reno to learn more about agriculture by touring farms, ranches and more.

To learn more about Ag in the Classroom curriculum, visit www.agclassroom.org/ok or contact Audrey Harmon, an Oklahoma AITC coordinator, at (405) 740-0160 or audrey.harmon@ag.ok.gov.

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Photo caption 1: Christie Puckett was selected as the 2019 Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom Teacher of the Year. Puckett (second from right) is shown here accepting her awards, including a gift basket of teaching resources she received during an awards ceremony at Maysville Elementary School. Assisting with the presentation are State AITC Coordinators (left to right) Audrey Harmon, Melody Aufill and Cheri Long.



Photo caption 2: Christie Puckett (fourth from left) is shown here (left to right) with State AITC Coordinators Cheri Long, Melody Afill, and Audrey Harmon; Rhonda Blish, district treasurer; Joe Puckett, husband; Jocelyn Puckett, daughter; Floyd Raney, father; and John Edwards, Maysville Elementary School principal.



Photo Caption 3: Christie Puckett has taught at Maysville Public Schools for her entire 34-year teaching career and has been selected as the 2019 Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom Teacher of the Year. She is shown here speaking to the Maysville Elementary School students after accepting her award.

