



Pictured: Keith Harman VFW National Commander in Chief, Ken Marshall VFW Arizona Commander, Darrel Moore, Past State Commander, Me Reba Dermody, AZ Auxiliary President, Dee Guillory, National Auxiliary President

Pendergast Teacher Finalist for the VFW Teacher of the Year Award

Ashley Marshall, Veteran and Sixth Grade Teacher at Rio Vista School is a hero to all

January 24, 2018 - Phoenix, Arizona – The [Veterans of Foreign Wars](#) (VFW) hold an annual contest to choose and celebrate three national teachers of the year. The winners are selected based on their outstanding commitment to teaching Americanism and patriotism to their students. Ashley Marshall, Sixth Grade Teacher from Rio Vista School in the [Pendergast District](#), is completing her 4th year at the school. Ms. Marshall is a veteran of the U.S. Army, and was honorably discharged after 5 years of Army service, including two deployments to Iraq. She was nominated for the award by her principal, Siobhan McCarthy, and found out in August 2017 she won for VFW Post 40. A month later she won for District 3 of the VFW in Phoenix, and on January 22, 2018, she won VFW Teacher of the Year for 6-8th grade for the State of Arizona. She will compete in the national contest in June.

Ms. McCarthy shares her reasons for nominating Ashley for this honor. “Each year, Ms. Marshall heads our Veteran’s Day assembly committee, where she puts together a full school (K-8th grade) celebration. Lessons are provided to students in the lower grades to help educate our students about the purpose behind this national holiday. A beautiful assembly is planned, coordinated and implemented for our community members, as well as our 4th-8th grade students and staff, to recognize our veterans. Ms. Marshall contacts the VFW, family members and community members on her own time to take part in the events. Each year, she has a speaker share their experiences, she puts together a video of photos from those who have served, and she displays a POW/MIA table for all of us to recognize our soldiers who have not yet returned home.”

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Additionally, Ms. Marshall is also a co-facilitator of the National Junior Honor Society, a service organization that dedicates their time to community service outside of school. This year, she and her members have hosted a food drive for St. Mary's Food Bank, they have spent numerous hours working for school-based organizations after school, and they have coordinated a toy drive to help the families in need in our Avondale school community. With all of her hours spent outside of her work day to better our school and community, she continues to be a fantastic mother of two preschool children even after the loss of her husband (also a U.S. Army veteran) two years ago.”

Everyone at Rio Vista School shares the same sentiment about Ashley Marshall, “There is no other teacher more deserving of this award, and one who will cherish it in her heart forever.”