



**The Chippewa Valley Schools 2021 Outstanding Teachers of the Year are Kathleen Rimmel, Kathleen Myers and Jessica Downham. The three teach at Erie Elementary, Wyandot Middle School and Chippewa Valley High School, respectively.**

**File photo by Deb Jacques**

## Chippewa Valley announces teachers of the year

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CLINTON TOWNSHIP/MACOMB TOWNSHIP — As the school year winds down, the accolades pick up.

The Chippewa Valley Schools 2021 Outstanding Teachers of the Year are: Kathleen Rimmel, a kindergarten teacher at Erie Elementary; Kathleen Myers, an eighth grade teacher at Wyandot Middle School; and Jessica Downham, who teaches science at Chippewa Valley High School.

Each year, the Macomb Intermediate School District sponsors the recognition with the 21 school districts in Macomb County submitting teachers to be represented, with one being chosen at each education level.

The honorees were announced at the district's May 17 Board of Education meeting. A video was shared about the honorees at the meeting.

In the video, Myers said her main goal is trying to figure out how each student learns best.

"Students in the past who maybe haven't done well with math, I try to give them that confidence," she said. "When you have confidence in something, that sparks an interest."

Myers has noticed that, when students get a chance to help one another, they are really good at it.

"The students who know what they're doing, learn deeper because they are teaching it to someone else," she said. "They are the best little teachers."

Due to the pandemic, Myers said she learned to be a lot more tech savvy. Before the pandemic, she provided students with answer keys for assignments, but this year, she taped lessons, so at any time, students can go to the assignment.

Rimmel has taught at Erie for 19 years, saying the kids are so enthusiastic and want to learn.

"For many of them, they are in school for the first time, so it's learning how to be patient and how to make friends," she said. "A five-year-old just wants to dive in and learn. They get excited when they make that connection to letters in their names."

Downham said one of her favorite curriculums she currently teaches is Next Generation Science Standards.

“You would normally be in teams of four and put whatever we’re talking about in the middle of the table and everyone has access to it,” she said. “It’s not, ‘Let’s read about what this is in the book.’”

Downham said over the years, she has learned from mentors and other science teachers.

“If we don’t work together, then everything falls apart and becomes individual,” she said. “Our job is different every day, and you love the challenge. It’s a great job.”

At the meeting, Superintendent Ron Roberts said he thinks the three honorees represent the teachers in the Chippewa Valley community so well.

“We all like to think that what we do is important and makes a difference,” he said. “In our school district, we all really support teachers. It’s where the rubber hits the road and where the difference is made in the lives of families and students.”

Myers said she feels it’s important that her students feel safe and does it by creating a community in the classroom.

“It’s such an honor, and I’m thankful to do what I love, and every day, hopefully, I can positively impact people,” she said.

Reading a letter from a former student about Rimmel, Roberts said, “she was a great teacher to me and always cared about her students first before herself. Kindergarten was my favorite school year because of her.”

Rimmel called it a great honor being recognized, thanking her colleagues who nominated her and her family for their support.

Downham said it’s important to her to build rapport with students and have a positive attitude, complimenting students on their work.