

Broward County Educator Named National Family Teacher of the Year

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (October 27, 2021) – Manoucheka Dolcine has been selected for the top family engagement honor in the nation as she was named the 2021 Toyota Family Teacher of the Year through a surprise announcement among her peers. For more than two decades, Dolcine has fostered family learning environments by involving both parents and children in her classroom with an emphasis on positive social interactions, sensory and social emotional activities, soft job skills, workforce and career development and academic mentorship programs for young adult parents.

The Toyota Family Teacher of the Year award, a national honor now in its 25th year, recognizes families play a crucial role in the success of children and salutes educators who are exceptional at using intergenerational approaches to engage students and their families in education.

“Manoucheka Dolcine’s passion and values align with our education focus and efforts to bring forward solutions co-created together with the community,” said Mike Goss, general manager, Toyota Social Innovation. “We are so inspired by Manoucheka’s work, and we are proud to name her the 2021 Toyota Family Teacher of the Year.”

Dolcine and runner-up Mario Godoy-Gonzalez, of Royal City, Washington, were surprised virtually in front of their peers in recent weeks. The public announcement of both winners was made today at the closing of the 2021 Families Learning Conference. The conference convenes national experts in education, family engagement and research to discuss and share the latest information regarding multigenerational approaches to learning.

Dolcine has worked hard to bring intentionality to her district's family engagement efforts by creating programming that responds to the needs of families. When she saw a need for an upgraded childcare solution, she proposed, designed and implemented a licensed pre-school program that has tripled the number of students who can be serviced in her Florida community. To combat chronic absence and promote program retention, Dolcine initiates weekly home visits and well-being checkups with parents and students. Additionally, she coordinates semester food and clothing distribution drives to ensure families basic needs are being met, so they can focus on the core multi-generational education programming.

NCFL president Felicia Cumings Smith says, "we are happy to recognize Manoucheka Dolcine as this year's winner. She is a visionary educator who is constantly assessing, creating and innovating for families in her community. By engaging multiple generations of the family in learning together, she is linking research to practice and fostering an environment where families can thrive."

Dolcine's school will receive \$20,000 to enhance her multi-generational program focused on teen parents. As runner-up, Mario Godoy-Gonzalez's school will receive a \$5,000 grant award to further his family engagement efforts. Since 1997, Toyota Family Teacher of the Year winners, runners-up and their respective organizations have received more than \$625,000 and funded 50 innovative teacher-led projects.