

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release
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Caption: Teacher Jennifer Rasner is helping the refuge education team for the summer.

‘Ding’ STAR teacher helps with environmental education

Thanks to a grant from a private family foundation awarded to “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS), J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge has hired a Summer Teachers Assisting Refuges (STAR) teacher for two months to help with educational programming for the WoW (Wildlife on Wheels) mobile classroom, summer virtual camp, fine-tuning curriculum for the school year, and other environmental education activities.

This year’s STAR, Jennifer Rasner, has been teaching fourth grade for two years at Allen Park Elementary in Fort Myers, where she specializes in language arts laced with social studies and science lessons.

“The task to teach everything is a challenge, so, often, the students read about science topics in their language arts lessons,” Rasner explains. “Since I am so passionate about conservation and the oceans, this is a huge component of the lessons in my classroom.”

She has been working with the Lee County School District for seven years after moving to Florida from a position as professor at Ridgewater College in Hutchinson, Minn. Before moving here, she had completed her master’s degree in education at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind.

Rasner will be concentrating her time on the WoW project. “The goal is to develop lessons that are relevant for the students in the area to enhance their understanding of the science standards with a hands-on experience,” she said. “The focus of the lessons will not only be to learn basic science requirements but also encourage excitement towards the wildlife and outdoor environments that surround them here in the state of Florida.”

At the same time, the STAR teacher will be absorbing knowledge of the refuge's ecology from its educators to take back to her classroom this fall.

"I plan to use this knowledge to increase classroom engagement and excitement for the kids with their learning," Rasner said. "The people at 'Ding' are clearly excited about what they do every day. I want to bring that passion to my students."

ABOUT DDWS

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, DDWS works to support J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge's mission of conservation, wildlife and habitat protection, research, and public education through charitable donations and Refuge Nature Shop profits.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566, 239-472-1100 ext. 4, or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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