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SAUK CITY; WIS. – Katelyn Dei, agricultural educator at the Slinger School District has been awarded the Outstanding Early Career Educator Award by the Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators (WAAE). Ms. Dei was presented this award at the WAAE Professional Development Conference held June 27-29, 2021 in La Crosse, WI.

Katelyn is a 6th year teacher and in her 4th year at Slinger where she has increased the membership by 65%. Her FFA Alumni has reclaimed their charter and the ag ed program boasts 11 semester courses in six ag career pathways with 3 of them offering science credits needed for graduation. Slinger’s ag ed program provides an auxiliary lab for students, small animal cages, aquaponic grow towers and vermiculture bins. Plans to expand include FFA Chapter affiliation in 2021, CASE “Intro to Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources” curriculum implementation in 2021-22, fundraising to build a greenhouse and a possible Food Science course on the horizon.

Katelyn teaches respect and accountability to her students and models humility and reflection within her own work which leads students to do the same. She serves as a mentor on the WAAE New Teacher Committee and on her professional Instagram page. After attending the WI NAAE Agriscience Institute in the summer of 2018, Katelyn began revising and writing all of the curriculum to be inquiry-based. To facilitate this scientific process in the classroom, students utilize interactive notebooks which have become so synonymous with learning that

students now create them for CDE practices and college classes after they graduate.

Katelyn is a firm believer in building premier leaders by being student-led. The students ran the fruit sale and order process with Minn-Tex, ran a “support dairy” yard sign campaign selling over 400 signs during Covid. In Byron, middle school students approached administration to begin teaching “Adaptive Agriculture,” a special education class where they designed their own lesson plans and hands-on activities with students each day. The students at Slinger reaped the rewards of running their own Program of Activities by being gold ranked with their first National Chapter Award. This teacher oversaw the spring 2021 launching of the after-school middle school agriculture education feeder program.

Dei’s professional growth is strong and consistent. Her endless energy shows in her leadership and involvement with AG Ed Discussion Lab, NAAE Communities of Practice, Instagram, Tik Tok, NAAE Teacher Turn the Key, CASE Agricultural Business Foundations course certification and we know she is a “professional development addict” working to improve not only herself, but her program.

WAAE is the professional association for agricultural educators in Wisconsin. Members include 410 middle school, high school, technical college and university educators. The focus of the association is to provide professional development, legislative support and educational resources for teachers to enhance their local agriculture education programs.

For more information about your local agriculture education program and to find out how you can support agriculture in your community, please contact your local agriculture education instructor or visit www.waae.com.

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