



MOST VALUABLE
TEACHER

Lori Matsunaga - Anaheim Ducks

Lori teaches 6-8th grade Math, Engineering, and Language Arts at St. Columban Catholic School and has been a teacher for 38 years. Lori has implemented the Anaheim Ducks S.C.O.R.E. program at each of the five schools she has been a teacher at. Lori also participates in the Anaheim Ducks *First Flight Field Trip* program which brings students to the Honda Center to learn and watch a practice. Lori is also a member of an all-teacher adult hockey league. Lori is passionate about providing quality, fun, and engaging education to each of her students and is a role model for many in her community.

Danielle Mullaney - Boston Bruins

Danielle teaches 7th grade Science at Atlantic Middle School and has been a teacher for seven years. Danielle has designed hands-on STEM projects during which students built hockey-themed pinball machines and used hockey to teach concepts like kinetic and potential energy. Danielle became a teacher because she wanted to impact her community through creating meaningful and inclusive learning experiences. Danielle enjoys leading school events including field trips, STEM Days, and a robotics program for students.

Aaron Nolan - Buffalo Sabres

Aaron teaches 6-8th grade STEAM at Depew Middle School and has been a teacher for 20 years. Aaron has used hockey to create real-world examples to teach his students about velocity, inertia, friction, and the engineering concepts that are behind new safety equipment. Aaron is passionate about finding new ways to engage his students with hands-on activities. Outside of the classroom, Aaron has organized trips for his students to Space Camp, secured 3D printers for the classroom, and has even served as the school mascot.

Deanna Sample - Calgary Flames

Deanna teaches 9-12th grade Math and Science at Winston Churchill High School and has been a teacher for 11 years. Deanna teaches in an alternative learning space, giving individualized attention to students. On top of being a hockey mom, Deanna has used hockey to teach math concepts such as probability, trigonometry, percentages, linear equations, and more. Outside of the classroom, Deanna volunteers in a variety of youth sports programs including boys volleyball and girls basketball.

Morgan Harris - Carolina Hurricanes

Morgan teaches 6th grade Science at Apex Friendship Middle School and has been a teacher for three years. Morgan uses Carolina Hurricanes players as examples in STEM problems and has decorated her classroom in the team's colors. Morgan fosters strong connections with students throughout the school, offering support and encouragement both inside and outside the classroom. Morgan is passionate about creating an environment where students can freely explore science, empowering them to think critically, take risks, and pursue their interests.

Bradley Nehrt - Chicago Blackhawks

Bradley teaches 7-12th grade Culinary and Baking at North Central High School and has been a teacher for 16 years. While hockey might not be an easy transition into the culinary classroom, Bradley has used the sport to connect with students over their shared interest. Bradley uses that trust to teach kitchen fundamentals, problem-solving skills, and practical knowledge in both culinary arts and everyday life. Bradley is passionate about guiding students and offering them a safe environment and a path to a promising future.

Matthew Felton - Colorado Avalanche

Matthew teaches 5th grade Math and Science at Red Sandstone Elementary School and has been a teacher for 15 years. Matthew has developed a project that allows students to create a table hockey game with a 3D printer, fabricating finger-sized sticks, nets, pucks, and goals. Students also graph and predict player statistics in their classes. Outside of the classroom, Matthew is an active contributor to the community, including building and maintaining the local community ice rink.

Cathy Martin - Columbus Blue Jackets

Cathy teaches 2nd and 3rd grade English Language Arts, English, Reading, and Writing at Southwest Licking Schools and has been a teacher for 13 years. Cathy is a passionate educator who enjoys helping her students reach their highest potential. Cathy enjoys sharing her love for hockey with her students through hockey-related readings and discussions. Outside of the classroom, Cathy is a dedicated hockey mom that enjoys attending her children's games.

Leon Friedrich - Dallas Stars

Leon teaches 11th grade Sports Management at Frisco Wakeland High School and has been a teacher for 12 years. Leon works with the local ECHL team to teach practical sports management concepts to his students. He also runs the district's Sports Management Internship program, placing students in various sports clubs around Dallas and evaluating student applications. Leon was nominated for Teacher of the Year at Wakeland High School this year.

Gina Torrance - Detroit Red Wings

Gina teaches 5-8th grade Science and Literature at St. Anselm Catholic School and has been a teacher for seven years. Gina incorporates the physics of skating, puck dynamics, and game strategy into STEM lessons, while also using the history of hockey to explore broader social and cultural themes. Outside of the classroom, Gina organizes STEM clubs, science fairs, and workshops, giving students opportunities to explore careers, connect with professionals, and learn important life skills.

Lee Porath - Edmonton Oilers

Lee teaches 10-12th grade Career and Technology, Business, Design, Media, Vehicle, Drama, and Science at École Secondaire Lacombe Composite High School and has been a teacher for 19 years. Lee develops hands-on projects that support local hockey programs, like having her business and media studies students create gift bags for a local U7 hockey tournament and creating video projects that incorporate her school's hockey program. Outside of the classroom, Lee manages the school's Drama Club and collaborates on community projects.

Alexander Artiles - Florida Panthers

Alexander teaches 6-8th grade Math at Pinecrest Cove Preparatory Academy and has been a teacher for two years. Alexander is passionate about making math relatable and exciting by using hockey as a teaching tool, incorporating real game scenarios and statistics into his lessons. Alexander is dedicated to creating an innovative approach inspiring students both in the classroom and beyond, creating a supportive and enriching environment where they can thrive. Outside of the classroom, Alexander leads a local youth ball hockey program and organizes school activities like Chess Club.

Nareg Dekermenjian - Los Angeles Kings

Nareg teaches 5th grade English Language Arts, Math, Science, Health, and Social Studies at Dixie Canyon Community Charter and has been a teacher for five years. Nareg has integrated hockey into his health lessons, focusing on the nutritional and physical health aspects, while also teaching his students about the teamwork and interpersonal aspects of hockey that can improve mental health and build lasting friendships and inclusion. Nareg is dedicated to teaching and genuinely caring for his students by providing a supportive and inspiring environment for everyone.

Angie Flowers - Minnesota Wild

Angie teaches older infants at Sandcastle Early Learning Center and has been a teacher for nine years. Angie is passionate about engaging her young students in simple science and art activities, fostering their curiosity and creativity. Angie greets parents and children with a smile every morning and encourages a love for hockey by reading hockey-related books and teaching her students to say, 'Go Wild!'.

Nathalie Déry - Montréal Canadiens

Nathalie teaches Kindergarten at École de l'Amitié and has been a teacher for 33 years. Nathalie has her students create a playoff bracket in which she engages her students' creativity and artistic side by having them draw logos of the teams competing. Nathalie also organizes a trip to have her students skate on an outdoor rink each winter. Her dedication to her students' growth and her innovative teaching methods have made a lasting impact on countless lives.

Ashley Egger - Nashville Predators

Ashley teaches Pre-K-12th grade Exceptional Education Art at Harris-Hillman School and has been a teacher for 19 years. Ashley has developed interactive art projects that have students simulate hockey by using pool noodles to hit a foam puck, create art inspired by ice, and design celebratory banners for the Nashville Predators. Ashley's innovative approach empowers her students and brings the school community together.

Cristin Zavocki - New Jersey Devils

Cristin teaches 4th grade STEM, Social Studies, and ELA at James Caldwell Elementary School and has been a teacher for 11 years. Cristin is passionate about creating engaging STEM lessons involving hockey, teaching about friction and force through hockey examples. Cristin enjoys volunteering as the Pride Club advisor, focusing on community outreach and making the local community and school better for everyone. Cristin's exceptional character is evident in her selection as the New Jersey Teacher of the Year.

Jennifer Temkin - New York Islanders

Jennifer teaches K-6th grade Elementary Education and Special Education at Stratford Road School and has been a teacher for 29 years. Jennifer enjoys engaging her students with hockey-themed word and math problems. Jennifer is passionate and dedicated to helping students understand challenging subjects. Outside of the classroom, Jennifer volunteers her time tutoring students and serves as a camp instructor.

Michael Campbell - New York Rangers

Michael teaches 9-12th grade as a Seminar Instructor and College Advisor at Mott Hall V High School and has been a teacher for 25 years. Michael is passionate about introducing students to hockey and STEM concepts through engaging lessons. Michael has even organized a small group to watch clips of the New York Rangers games and joined students in their physical education hockey curriculum. Outside of the classroom, Michael is dedicated to creating opportunities for students to explore their interests and plan for their futures.

Karen Nickle - Ottawa Senators

Karen teaches 5-6th grade English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Religion, STEM, Computer Science, and Physical Education at Sacred Heart Catholic School Marmora and has been a teacher for 16 years. Karen is passionate about providing opportunities for her students to explore STEM concepts through hockey to ensure the lessons are engaging and fun. Outside of the classroom, Karen is an active participant in her church community and supports many community initiatives.

Victoria Schneider - Philadelphia Flyers

Victoria teaches 3rd grade English, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies at Chester Community Charter School and has been a teacher for six years. Victoria has developed creative projects that incorporate hockey, such as having students draft NHL teams to follow throughout the season and research the history and geography of their team. Outside of the classroom, she enjoys volunteering with a local community organization that helps provide students with access to everyday necessities.

Stephanie Staub - Pittsburgh Penguins

Stephanie teaches K-4th grade STEM at Seventh Street Elementary and has been a teacher for eight years. Stephanie is passionate about engaging her students through hands-on, meaningful projects that bring concepts to life, using hockey to teach STEM concepts like angles, speed, force, and energy. Stephanie enjoys organizing after-school programs to inspire a student's lifelong love of learning. Outside of the classroom, Stephanie is dedicated to community initiatives like a 'Books and Bikes' group and hosting community events.

Kellie Yoakum - San Jose Sharks

Kellie teaches 7-8th grade Science, Design, and Modeling at August Elementary School, and has been a teacher for 11 years. Kellie is passionate about making Science concepts easy to understand through hockey and has organized a student field trip to watch their local AHL team. Outside of the classroom, Kellie also coaches volleyball, softball, and color guard. Her dedication to her students, her passion for teaching, and her supportive nature make her an inspiring and invaluable figure in education.

Nicki Vannatter – Seattle Kraken

Nicki teaches 4-5th grade Gifted Elementary at Willow Crest Elementary School and has been a teacher for 21 years. Nicki is passionate about extending the learning for her gifted students through engaging STEM activities and hands-on projects through hockey, teaching about angles, physics, and surface area by examining the difference between Olympic and NHL sized rinks. Nicki uses her hockey-decorated classroom to relate math and science concepts to real-life. Outside of the classroom, Nicki volunteers at community events and teaches cultural art lessons.

Bonnie Lair – St. Louis Blues

Bonnie teaches 7th grade Science, Technology, Engineering and Math STEM at Jersey Community Middle School and has been a teacher for 25 years. Bonnie teaches about angles, speed, materials and padding, and friction through the lens of hockey. Bonnie is passionate about encouraging her students to be independent thinkers and effective communicators. Outside of the classroom, Bonnie is an integral part of the after-school program that combines tutoring with enrichment activities.

Theodore Newfield - Tampa Bay Lightning

Theodore teaches 9-12th grade Game and Simulations and Computer Science at Armwood High School and has been a teacher for nine years. Theodore employs an innovative approach to educating students on STEM concepts exploring topics like geometry, energy, and data analysis through hockey. Theodore enjoys blending hands-on learning, real-world applications, and modern technology. Outside of the classroom, Theodore has made a significant impact on his community by leading the creation of a state-of-the-art STEAM lab.

Johnathon Hinds - Toronto Maple Leafs

Johnathon teaches K-8th grade Physical Education at Brownridge Public School and has been a teacher for 15 years. Johnathon has helped facilitate field trips for the school to attend local AHL hockey games and is passionate about finding innovative ways to incorporate STEM concepts into his programs. Johnathon has created a new floor hockey program to provide opportunities for students who may not have access to ice hockey, and he is committed to reducing barriers for students with special needs, empowering them to be successful teammates.

Denise Hevner – Utah Hockey Club

Denise teaches 9-12th grade Welding at Highland High School and has been a teacher for 17 years. Denise introduces the concept of structural integrity through ice rink design. Hockey is also brought into the curriculum through the welding that is required in the production of scoreboards, goalposts, board construction, chillers, and zambonis. Outside of the classroom, Denise volunteers as the team manager for the school's high school hockey team, fostering unity among players, coaches, and parents.

Stacey Belecoshaw – Vancouver Canucks

Stacey teaches 6th and 7th grade Design, Technologies, Art, Career Education, Language Arts, Mathematics, Physical Education and Health at Crosstown Elementary School and has been a teacher for 39 years. With a classroom that overlooks Roger's Arena, Stacey teaches her students about the Canucks players and team. Stacey enjoys incorporating current issues such as climate change and cultural diversity into her STEAM lessons. Outside of the classroom, Stacey is

committed to community impact through her advocacy for young artists, cancer awareness, and support for vulnerable students and families.

Dena Jones Smith - Vegas Golden Knights

Dena teaches 6-8th grade English Language Learners, Robotics, and Technology at Sedway Middle School and has been a teacher for 20 years. Dena enjoys utilizing project-based learning concepts to engage students and prepare them for future jobs through hands-on activities and has explored technical careers in hockey like ice technicians. Outside of the classroom, Dena has helped fundraise for local charities and has contributed to the success of small businesses with partnerships that support economic development in the community.

Julia Rulapaugh - Washington Capitals

Julia teaches 5th grade at Deale Elementary School and has been a teacher for five years. Julia encourages students to keep players stats and then works those stats into her curriculum. Julia has initiated *the Caps in School Reading* program to motivate her students to keep up with their reading. Julia is also enthusiastic about finding innovative teaching methods that have a positive impact on her students and the community. Outside of the classroom, Julia enjoys volunteering to build relationships with her students and their families, including coaching recreational cheer.