



## Media Release

### **Patricia Orta, Jungman STEM Magnet, Chicago, Illinois (Chicago Public Schools) recognized for Excellence in Energy**

**For Immediate Release – June 15, 2021**

Manassas, Virginia – The NEED Project is pleased to announce the 2021 recipient of the Bob Thompson Excellence in Energy Award is Patricia Orta of Jungman STEM Magnet in Chicago, Illinois (Chicago Public Schools).

The Bob Thompson Excellence in Energy Award was created by NEED in memory of long-time NEED teacher and staff member Bob Thompson. Bob was a dedicated teacher, friend, and proponent of science and energy education. His time at NEED enriched many, encouraged all, and improved the way we present and teach about energy in our curriculum and training workshops. Bob was a good friend to many here at NEED and he and his spirit live on in our work. Because of this, NEED established the Bob Thompson Excellence in Energy Award that is given each year to a teacher who exemplifies Bob's childlike wonder of science, technology and energy.

The award includes a \$1,000 cash grant to the teacher to use as he/she chooses in the classroom and an all-expenses paid trip to the NEED National Energy Conference for Educators. The award will be presented to Patricia at the National Energy Conference hosted in Albuquerque, New Mexico, July 18-22, 2021.

Patricia's nomination from her colleague Cynthia Valenciana, highlighted her dedication to students and the knowledge of energy. She said of Patricia, "Mrs. Orta has put tremendous efforts in bringing STEM to life. The minute you walk in her room, it is evident that students are working and creating and problem solving. They are utilizing solar ovens, creating ways to upcycle materials, and solving energy problems. I especially love how they share their knowledge with others and teach it forward."

Her science classroom nomination was filled with many amazing examples of how Patricia goes above and beyond. Each year, Patricia makes sure every single student in 6<sup>th</sup> grade receives an energy conservation kit to take home and not only use, but to also teach their families about the things they are learning in class and help make energy conscious decisions. She has challenged her middle school students with a recycling project to get creative using only recyclable materials such as water bottles, plastic spoons, and newspaper to build furniture. Another challenge was to create costumes they could wear in class but could only be made of recycled materials to help eliminate waste. Her students go on to say, "Mrs. Orta is not an ordinary teacher, she is extraordinary! She believes in us and makes sure that we continuously have all the tools we need in order to be successful."

Patricia also engages her students in Project Syncere at Jungman STEM Magnet. Project Syncere stands for Supporting Youth's Needs with Core Engineering Research Experiments. The mission is to prepare the minds of underrepresented students and help create pathways for students to pursue careers in STEM.

NEED recognizes Patricia's tireless efforts to engage all students in learning about energy and values her dedication and passion.

Congratulations to this extraordinary educator!

For more information about the NEED Project and the Bob Thompson Excellence in Energy Award, please contact Mary E. Spruill at (703) 257-1117 or [mspruill@need.org](mailto:mspruill@need.org).

<https://www.NEED.org>

<https://www.need.org/educators/distinguished-service-bob-thompson-awards/>

###