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**Teacher Feature - Janet Utterback
Teacher for 25 Years**

Currently Teaches: Second Grade
School: Tyler Skills School, Stockton Unified School

DID YOU KNOW?!

The root end of an onion will make you cry more. Leave the root end intact [when you cut an onion](#), to reduce tearing.

Imagine this...
[Story Writing Contest](#)

Deadline: November 1

The contest aligns with the 4 Cs of the Common Core State Standards: collaboration, creativity/innovation, critical thinking, and communication while connecting students to the world around them!

From sports to arts and crafts, family dinners, and nature walks, agriculture is a source of adventure and experience for everyone. Use the *Imagine this... Story Writing Contest* to strengthen critical thinking skills as students explore their daily connections to farming and agriculture! Help your students research and turn their knowledge into a creative story for the chance to win great prizes and the opportunity to have their published story shared with students and educators throughout California.

Six state-winning authors, one from each grade (3-5), will have their stories illustrated and published in a book. Awards will be presented to state and regional winning authors.

Meet **Common Core State Standards in English language arts for third-eighth grade!** *Imagine this...* meets standards for writing in Text Types and Purposes, Production and Distribution of Writing, and Research to Build and Present Knowledge.

Deadline: Postmarked by November 1
www.LearnAboutAg.org/imaginethis

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When did you decide to become a teacher?

I was working as a secretary at a non-profit agency that trained adults to teach other adults to read in Fairbanks, Alaska. Usually, our clients needed our services after a crisis in their lives - a divorce, death of a spouse, or a need to get a job. They needed to learn to read and write very quickly, and it was a huge struggle for them. That's when I decided that nobody should be in that situation, and I returned to college to earn my teaching credential.

What has been your favorite AITC program?

I received a taste-test grant last year. I was surprised how many fruits and vegetables my students had never tasted. I offered fresh, canned, and dried ones. Most students had never tasted fresh cantaloupe, green olives, coconut, blueberries and many other fruits and vegetables. Almost all preferred the fresh. My eyes were opened! Local, easily obtainable fresh fruits and vegetables were not being eaten in most of our students' homes.

What's so great about teaching about agriculture?

It is extremely easy to teach about agriculture in any classroom. You can sprout avocado seeds and sweet potatoes seeds with minimal effort.

What do you hope your students have learned?

I hope my students have learned we have an abundance of locally grown fruits and vegetables that both taste great and are healthful. I hope they will ask their parents to purchase them.

Why is it important to Learn About Ag?

It is so important that students learn about agriculture (especially in the Central Valley), so when they become voters, they will make sure agricultural land is protected. Also, it is important for children to understand the fruits and vegetables grown here will help them become healthier.

What other resources do you recommend to

teachers?

The California Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI) provides educational materials that are a wonderful source for teaching K-12 students about California land use history, geography, farm to table initiatives, and other social and environmental issues.

1. Literacy for Life Grants

Deadline: October 1, 2015

Once again, we're awarding grants to teachers looking to enhance the way they incorporate agriculture into their classrooms. Grant possibilities are limitless; be creative and innovative with your idea! Initiate a new project or expand an existing one that promotes agriculture.

For grant ideas and to apply, visit <http://learnaboutag.org/literacyforlife>.

2. 2015 California Agriculture in the Classroom Teacher Conference

Register Today!

Oct. 22-24, 2015

The Queen Mary, Long Beach, CA

Join us for the 20th California Ag in the Classroom Conference as we go *Full STEAM Ahead*. Come aboard The Queen Mary October 22- 24 to learn from speakers, participate in workshops, experience field trips and learn how you can incorporate agriculture in your classroom.

Speakers and topics include:

- Common Core standards with AITC resources
 - Dr. Bowning Neddeau, Assistant Professor
- After school programs and why they matter
 - Michael Funk, After School Division Director
- Invasive pests and their impact on our state
 - Dr. Matin Hauser, Senior Insect Biosystematist

[Register online](#): \$280. Please call (800)700-2482 or email info@learnaboutag.org with questions.

Call for Proposals

We are seeking enthusiastic presenters who would like to share their expertise and educational resources with conference attendees. [Proposals](#) are still being accepted for Make 'n' Take presenters and *A Taste of California* dinner table hosts!

3. Scholarship Opportunities for 2015 AITC Conference

AITC is pleased to offer a limited number of scholarships for California teachers to attend the 2015 California Agriculture in the Classroom Conference, October 22-24. The scholarships will cover a minimum full registration fee of \$280. Depending on sponsorships received, some scholarships may cover hotel and travel. The deadline has passed, but you can still [submit an application](#) to be placed on our waiting list.

Amador County Teachers

The Charles Spinetta Family is pleased to offer scholarship opportunities for teachers in Amador County to attend the 2015 California Agriculture in the Classroom Conference, October 22-24.

Apply for a [scholarship](#) now!

4. Life Lab School Garden Workshop Saturday, October 7, 2015

UC Santa Cruz- Life Lab's Garden Classroom

Plant It, Grow It, Eat It! Garden-Enhanced Nutrition Education- Spring Version (Grades K-8)

- Cost: \$180/person.
- One semester unit of graduate education credit available per day for an additional \$60.

[Register](#) for this event and other upcoming workshops at www.lifelab.org.

5. *Imagine this...* Story Writing Contest

Deadline: Nov. 1, 2014

Put your students' imaginations and creative writing skills to use with the *Imagine this...* Story Writing Contest. This contest promotes creative writing, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. The contest meets Common Core State Standards and helps students make real-life connections to agriculture. Six stories, one from each grade level, third through eighth, will be selected as state winners. For more information, and to download the entry form, visit <http://learnaboutag.org/imaginethis/>. You can also [read a book](#) of past state-winning stories!

6. National Grant Opportunities

CHS Classroom Grant

Deadline: September 15, 2015

The \$1,500 grants will be awarded to K-12 core education teachers whose innovative classroom projects use agricultural concepts to teach reading, writing, math, nutrition, science and/or social studies. Recipients will be notified by email on or before October 1, 2015. [Apply today!](#)

Target Field Trip Grants

Deadline: October 1, 2015

Target stores award Field Trip Grants to K-12 schools nationwide. Each grant is valued up to \$700. [Apply today!](#)

More grants:

- [Capital Planet Foundation Grants](#)
- [Green Thumb Challenge Grant](#)
- [Project Learning Tree GreenWorks! Grants](#)
- [American Horticultural Society Great American Gardeners Awards](#)
- [Donald Samull Classroom Herb Garden Grant](#)
- [Jamba Juice-It's All About the Fruits & Veggies Grant](#)
- [Lowe's Toolbox for Education Grant Program](#)

A "Sour" Subject

Reinforce reading, observation, math, and writing skills by comparing a grapefruit to a lemon! (Grades 5-6)

[Download](#) a copy of the activity today!

County - Local Events

Yolo County- 2015 Teacher Wine Grapes Day

September 12 and 19, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

- Tours, hands-on activities and free resources!
- Located at Clarksburg Vineyards (Clarksburg, CA)
- Details at: [Yolo County Farm Bureau](#)

Sacramento- Farm-to-Fork Festival

September 26, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.

- Free admission
- Interact with local grocers, farmers and ranchers
- Food, wine, beer, music, cooking demonstrations
- Details at: [America's Farm-to-Fork Capital](#)

Ventura- Ventura County Farm Day

September 26, 4 p.m. - 9 p.m.

- Live music, farm-fresh food, family fun
- Purchase tickets at: [Ventura County Farm Day](#)

Merced County- Farm2U Day

October 8, 2015

- Educational event for third-graders
- Volunteers needed
- Details at: [Merced County Farm Bureau](#)

Monterey County- FREP/WPHA Conference

November 5-6

Nutrient Management: Challenges and Opportunities.

- Current research on nutrient management
- Located at Embassy Suites in Seaside, CA
- Details at: [Western Plant Health Association](#)



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