



Cristina Veresan

# Science teacher exposes students to real world

## One of three in Florida to get fellowship

PORT ST. LUCIE — As a science teacher at Southport Middle School, Cristina Veresan isn't satisfied teaching students out of a textbook.

Once a quarter, she takes her students to the Savannahs Recreation Area Park for real life lessons.

"It is imperative students understand the natural world around them," Ms. Veresan said last week.

At the same time, she's hoping to increase her knowledge of teaching science by becoming one of three Florida teachers to receive a fellowship.

The National Science Teachers Association chose Ms. Veresan to participate in the New Science Teacher Academy's professional development fellowship

program.

Teachers were chosen on the basis of "how strong a desire they had to want to grow as a professional in science teaching," said Kate Meyer, public relations director for the association.

As part of the program, teachers will be paired with more experienced instructors to whom they can turn for advice and guidance in teaching science, she said.

They will also get to attend national conference of the

association in New Orleans.

It will feature workshops on how the teachers can more effectively teach science, she said.

A third-year teacher, Ms. Veresan said she likes the idea of having a "real sense of community with other science teachers."

Her specialties in science are biology and ecology, she said.

During the trips to the

Savannahs, she said, she works with park service personnel to come up with different lessons for the students.

Past lessons have included identifying wildlife and learning about a controlled burn, she said.

Ms. Veresan said she believes science education was too based on knowledge in a textbook.

She believes the students need to experience science in the real world.

"Anything that gets kids doing science is more beneficial to their education," Ms. Veresan said.

With school budgets being tight, she said she's hoping the community will help provide funding for activities such as student field trips.