



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

31 Chicago area teachers honored as Golden Apple Award Finalists
Award for excellence in teaching celebrating 26th year

CHICAGO (April 11, 2011) – Golden Apple, a leader in advancing the teaching profession in Illinois for 26 years, is pleased to announce the 31 finalists for the 2011 Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching. The finalists, all 4th – 8th grade teachers, were selected from a pool of 185 applicants and more than 600 nominees. (A complete list of the finalists can be found at the end of this release.)

Golden Apple has recognized outstanding Chicago-area educators annually since 1986. The creation of Golden Apple founders Mike and Pat Koldyke, The Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching aim to recognize and honor outstanding teachers for their contributions to building a stronger, better-educated society. The recently honored finalists will undergo a final round of observation and review before the 10 recipients are announced in May.

“We are fortunate to be able to honor excellence in teachers, and provide these teachers with opportunities to leverage their ideas and experiences to benefit the teaching profession,” said Dominic Belmonte, president and CEO of Golden Apple. “The Golden Apple Awards believes that excellent teaching transcends place and circumstance, and adapts to the needs of students where those students are found, and brings them closer to becoming productive citizens and healthy people.”

Golden Apple accepts nominations each fall. Anyone may nominate an eligible teacher but teachers may not nominate themselves. Eligible teachers must be full-time classroom teachers at public or non-public schools in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, or Will counties and be committed to continue teaching in Illinois for at least two subsequent years. Awards focus on a rotating group of grade levels (Pre-K - 3, 4 - 8, and 9 - 12). In 2011, 4 - 8 grade teachers are the focus of the Awards.

Distinguished retired teachers, college/university professors, administrators, and former Golden Apple Award recipients serve on Golden Apple’s selection committee. Committee members apply research-based professional standards to identify teachers who exemplify the highest standards and practices of the teaching profession. The selection process includes classroom observations of all Award finalists and interviews with colleagues, supervisors, students, and parents.

Each Golden Apple Award recipient receives a tuition-free, spring semester sabbatical to study at Northwestern University. Each recipient also receives a \$3,000 cash award. Perhaps most importantly, Award recipients become Fellows of the Golden Apple Academy of Educators, providing them a stronger voice and a larger stage from which to make an impact.

Quick Facts

The 2011 Golden Apple Awards finalists include:

- Two Golden Apple Teaching Scholars
- Eleven National Board Certified teachers
- Twenty-four of the 31 finalists teach in Cook County – including 17 CPS teachers, three Chicago charter school teachers, one Chicago independent/private school teacher, and three suburban teachers
- One teacher from DuPage County, and six teachers in Lake County
- Since the program's inception, 250 teachers in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and Will counties have earned Golden Apple Awards. In addition, a cohort of 10 teachers from Central Illinois was inducted into the Academy in 2008.

Golden Apple Academy members have directly helped more than 5,000 Illinois teachers to become more effective in the classroom and indirectly helped tens of thousands of others. Additionally, half a million Illinois children have been positively affected by Golden Apple Scholars, who have become teachers in Illinois schools of need with extensive preparation and mentoring support, provided with the help of Academy members, since 1993.

The 254 currently active Academy members have more than 2,000 collective years of teaching experience.

The recipients of the 2011 Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching will be honored at a black-tie event on Friday, October 21, at WTTW/Channel 11 Studios in Chicago. WTTW will also broadcast the awards in a one-hour television program following the event.

About Golden Apple

Celebrating its 26th anniversary, Golden Apple began with founders Mike and Pat Koldyke and a shared inspiration — to offer outstanding schoolteachers a level of recognition and engagement in the larger work of education reform. Golden Apple's successful track record of integrated, innovative programs and resources enhance the quality, resiliency, and creativity of classroom teachers and improve teaching and learning throughout Illinois. Qualified, passionate educators — including Golden Apple Award-recipients and finalists — lead a small staff of dedicated employees with functional and program expertise. A connected and committed board of directors oversees Golden Apple's strategic direction. Together with a larger community of expert educators, this nonprofit organization works to ensure that all Illinois children have the excellent teachers they deserve. Visit www.goldenapple.org for more information.

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Golden Apple

Mr. Scott Baeseman
Lake Forest Country Day School
Chorus, General Music, World Music, Music History

Ms. Barbara Binversie
Deer Path Middle School - East
LA, Math and Social Studies

Ms. Meg Burns
Gallistel Language Academy
All Subjects

Ms. Beverly A. Clancy-Nunn
Charles Gates Dawes Elementary School
All Subjects

Ms. Teresa De Santiago
Richard J. Daley Elementary Academy
Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, ESL

Ms. Staci Garner
University of Chicago Laboratory Schools
Humanities

Mr. Marc Devon Hans
Hanson Park Elementary School
General Science

Ms. Erica Barraza
Lotus Elementary School
Reading, Language Arts/Spelling, Math, Science, Social Studies

Ms. Tiffany Brugman
Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies
Reading, Language Arts, Humanities

Ms. Judy Choi
Bartolome de Las Casas Charter School
Math, reading, science, writing, social studies

Mr. Rick Coppola
John B. Drake Elementary School
All Subjects

Ms. Chandra D. Garcia
William H. Ray Elementary
Science and Health

Mr. Ronald Ingram Hale
Avalon Chicago International Charter School
Science/Character Education

Ms. Arleta Ingram
Andrew Carnegie Elementary School
Science

Mr. Gerard Joseph Kovach
Ruben Salazar Bilingual Center
Language Arts & Science

Ms. Martha Ivette Loza
Little Village Academy
Language Arts

Ms. Katie Lyons
National Teachers Academy
Reading, Writing, Social Studies

Ms. Anne Oberdzinski
Polaris Charter Academy
All Subjects

Mr. Kyle Radcliff
Newberry Math and Science Academy
Math

Dr. Talyia Eve Riemer
Daniel Boone Elementary School
Reading, Writing

Mr. Michael Joseph Sementa
Carl Sandburg Middle School
Body Systems, Science, Technology Modules

Mr. Matthew Robert Sniadecki
Jefferson Junior High School
Language Arts, Social Science

Mr. Howard Templer
Braeside Elementary School
All Subjects

Ms. Sharon Kranz
Roslyn Road Elementary School
All Subjects

Ms. Paige Lunde
Wilmette Junior High School
Drawing, Painting, Printmaking, 2D Art

Ms. Jennifer Misong Magiera
National Teachers Academy
Semi-Departmentalized Math, Science, Social Science, Writing

Mr. Bradley Parker
Josephine Locke Elementary
Humanities and Writing

Ms. Eliza Ramirez
Emiliano Zapata Academy
Reading, Writing

Ms. Katie Adrienne Schneider
Tarkington School of Excellence
Reading, Writing, Word Study, Science, Social Studies, Mathematics, Human Development

Ms. Lisa Simoncelli-Bulak
Westdale Elementary
Reading, Language Arts, Science/Health, Social Studies, Spelling, and Math

Ms. Carla Stone
Nichols Middle School
All Subjects