



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Golden Apple celebrates excellence in teaching  
at Chicago-area education community's version of the Oscars  
Ten top pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers to be honored at awards ceremony tonight

CHICAGO (September 25, 2009) – Golden Apple, a non-profit organization dedicated to recognizing and developing excellence in teaching, tonight will honor the 2009 class of Golden Apple Award winners, 10 of the Chicago area's best pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers:

- Jeanette Hachmeister, Child's Voice School, Wood Dale
- Gloria Mayer, James Otis Elementary School, Chicago
- Christina Hayward, University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, Chicago
- Jennifer Phares, Orville T. Bright Elementary School, Chicago
- Maria Hernandez, Irma C. Ruiz Elementary School, Chicago
- Kristin O'Rourke Salamanca, Red Oak Elementary School, Highland Park
- Melissa Hooker, Oscar Mayer Magnet School, Chicago
- Peter Schreurs, Laura B. Sprague School, Lincolnshire
- Michele Mangold, Dryden Elementary School, Arlington Heights
- David Sobel, Hunting Ridge Elementary School, Palatine

This year's winners were announced in May, and to celebrate their achievement and kick off the 2009-2010 school year, Golden Apple will recognize them with a awards ceremony at WTTW's studios Friday night, including a cocktail reception and a silent auction.

"While other organizations bestow awards on teachers in K-12 education, the Golden Apple Awards go beyond teacher recognition, rewarding teachers with opportunities for educational enrichment and for leveraging their award-winning ideas and experience to benefit the profession," said Dominic Belmonte, president and CEO of Golden Apple.

Each of the 10 Golden Apple Award winners will receive a tuition-free spring-term sabbatical at Northwestern University; a personal computer; \$3,000; and membership in the Golden Apple Academy of Educators, which now has inducted 230 expert teachers who work together to ensure that all children have the excellent teachers they deserve.

A total of 972 teachers from Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake and Will counties were nominated for the award, which was first presented in 1986. Thirty finalists were named in March.

The Awards selection committee is comprised of distinguished Chicago-area educators. Two selection committee members observed each of the 30 finalists in their classroom and interviewed their principal and selected colleagues, parents and students.

In addition to the 10 Award winners, Golden Apple is recognizing 17 Teachers of Distinction — Award finalists whose superior teaching work was noted by the selection committee. The Teachers of Distinction

are recognized for their distinguished contribution to teaching and are asked to participate in Golden Apple programs.

“Through the Golden Apple Academy of Educators and high-profile Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching, Golden Apple recognizes and rewards outstanding teachers. Most importantly, the organization uses their experience as a conduit to elevate the teaching profession. Golden Apple leverages the talent of these superior teachers to create and strengthen response to the educational needs of Illinois children,” explained Belmonte.

The Award winners and Teachers of Distinction will be honored, along with their friends and family and Golden Apple supporters, at tonight’s ceremony, which subsequently will be aired as a one-hour prime-time special on WTTW/Channel 11.

Golden Apple Awards rotate through grade levels on an annual basis. Nominations for the 2010 awards, which will honor 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, are currently be accepted. For more information or to submit a nomination, visit [www.goldenapple.org](http://www.goldenapple.org).

#### About Golden Apple

Golden Apple began in 1985 with founders Mike and Pat Koldyke and a shared inspiration — to offer outstanding school teachers the level of recognition enjoyed by actors at the Academy Awards. Golden Apple’s successful track record now spans more than 20 years. Integrated, innovative Golden Apple 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-winners 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, the not-for-profit organization works to ensure that all Illinois children have the excellent teachers they deserve.

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