

Golden Apple Foundation

NEWS RELEASE

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10 Chicago-area teachers named winners of Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching

(CHICAGO — March 15, 2006) Golden Apple Foundation, which is dedicated to recognizing and developing excellence in teaching, today announced the names of 10 Chicago-area winners of the 2006 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching in grades pre-kindergarten through third.

The 10 winners include teachers at four Chicago public schools, one Chicago Catholic school, and five suburban public schools located in Mundelein, Oak Park, Palatine, Skokie and Wilmette.

A total of 850 teachers from Cook, Lake and DuPage counties were nominated for the award, which was first presented in 1986. Thirty finalists were named in January.

Each of the 10 Golden Apple Award winners will receive a tuition-free fall-term sabbatical at Northwestern University; a personal computer from Apple; \$3,000; and membership in the Golden Apple Academy, which now has inducted 200 expert teachers who work together to ensure that all children have the excellent teachers they deserve.

The Awards selection committee is comprised of 90 Chicago-area educators. Two committee members observed each of the 30 finalists in their classroom and interviewed their principal and selected colleagues, parents and students.

The winners will be honored at an award ceremony on May 13 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, which subsequently will be aired as a one-hour prime-time special on WTTW/Channel 11.

A detailed list of the Award winners follows:

Winners of the 2006 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching

- **Kristie A. Charles, grade 3**
Hunting Ridge Elementary School
1105 W. Illinois Ave., Palatine, IL
847/963-5300
A student, a parent and a school-district administrator each used the phrase “phenomenal teacher” to describe Kristie Charles. A Golden Apple observer noted Charles’ classroom is a model of inclusion in which she sees to it that children grow socially, emotionally, intellectually and academically through nurturing and sincere caring
- **Kristin Ziemke Fastabend, kindergarten**
Burley Elementary School
1630 W. Barry Ave., Chicago
773/534-5475
In the classroom with these young children, she demonstrates her passion for language and literacy and her desire for students to become lifelong learners. Kristin Ziemke Fastabend is constantly in motion, a Golden Apple observer said, thinking about and acting upon how she can help her students learn and how to make the classroom and the school a better place for all.
- **Dianne Hamelly, grades 1-2**
Fremont Elementary School
28908 N. Fremont Center Rd., Mundelein
847/837-0437
A teacher at Fremont since 1986, Dianne Hamelly wants her students to love learning, receive joy from reading, be independent thinkers and begin to understand how to respectfully disagree with the ideas of others. “She is one of the best and brightest in our profession,” a Golden Apple observer concluded, “she brings innovation and energy to the classroom on a daily basis.”
- **Erica Hodges-Hilgart, grade 1**
Piccolo Elementary School
1040 N. Keeler Ave., Chicago
773/534-4425
A parent of one of Erica Hodges-Hilgart’s students said, “Erica is basically too wonderful for words. Her love of reading, her selflessness, her ability to inspire parents and children as to what education can do for them and their child is inspirational.”

- **Sandy L. Lucas, Fine Arts, grades PreK-6**
Murphy Elementary School
3539 W. Grace St., Chicago
773/534-5223

A Chicago Public School teacher since 1982 and a professional musician in her own right, Sandy Lucas's 28 students find a way to share 25 guitars. She floats from student to student while they practice, monitoring finger placement and body position. At the end of the lesson, she reminds them, "We have after-school guitar, because I have not had enough fun today."
- **Sandra L. Noel, Physical Ed, grades K-5**
Hatch Elementary School
1000 N. Ridgeland Ave., Oak Park
708/524-3095

Sandy Noel's approach to teaching physical education is very cutting edge, a school administrator said. She integrates nutrition, dance, and brain research and core subjects. She teaches her students to use their bodies and minds together to enhance health and learning.
- **Ziomara D. Perez, pre-kindergarten**
Jahn Elementary School
3149 N. Wolcott Ave., Chicago
773/534-5500

Ziomara Perez is the first Golden Apple Award winner who received her teacher preparation from the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois program. She promotes and celebrates diversity and guides parents to be their child's teacher. "She is a master synthesizer, an advocate for children and parents, and a generous teacher leader," a Golden Apple observer concluded. "If you have a child or grandchild, you will want them in her class."
- **Jennifer L. Sime, grade 3**
Our Lady of the Gardens
13300 S. Langley Ave., Chicago
773/568-4009

Teaching at a school in one of Chicago's poorest communities, children begin learning the moment they enter Jennifer Sime's classroom. They drop off books in a "need a new book" box, along with their report, which Sime's reviews that day. There are no discipline problems in this classroom — the children are kind and respectful to each other. They write everyday and each day is filled with quiet moments of learning.

- **Kevan H. Truman, grade 3**
Central Elementary School
900 Central Ave., Wilmette
847/251-3252

Every moment is a teachable moment in Kevan Truman's classroom. No time is wasted. Children review capitals of states while waiting for an assembly to begin. Parents say Truman's love of learning is contagious and their children are infected on a daily basis. There are no wrong answers in his classroom — each person and each idea is valued and connected to previous learning or applied to the work at hand.

- **Karen M. Wylie, kindergarten**
Elizabeth Meyer School
8100 Tripp Ave., Skokie
847/673-1223

Karen Wylie's former students recall in vivid detail the powerful lessons they learned in kindergarten; ideas that transformed them into sensitive, curious human beings and life-long learners. "She's a developer of human talent," they said. "She is totally engaged and excited about learning."