



## **Golden Apple Foundation Partners with National-Louis University and Kohl Children's Museum to Launch Early Childhood Education Scholars Program**

(CHICAGO – June 23, 2010) Chicago-based Golden Apple Foundation is partnering with National-Louis University and Glenview, IL-based Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago to launch the Early Childhood Education Scholars Program. This partnership is a combined effort to alleviate the significant barriers faced by those who wish to enter the early childhood education field with type 04 teaching certification, and increase the number of qualified early childhood education teachers in Illinois schools. Employment, scheduling of preclinical and preprimary work opportunities and tuition costs are some of the barriers faced by students wishing to enter the early childhood field.

Five adult students have been chosen as Scholars in this year's pilot program. They will enroll in NLU's renowned Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education program (type 04 certification) this fall. It is a two-year cohort program. Students will also concurrently participate in professional development at Kohl Children's Museum and serve as interns at the museum. The students chosen for the program are also Golden Apple Scholars: A large percentage of Golden Apple Scholars are first-generation college attendees.

The Early Childhood Education Scholars Program's Summer Institute has begun this month at Kohl Children's Museum and is comprised of 10 evening sessions on topics of specific interest for early childhood educators. Award-winning Golden Apple teachers are teaching the sessions. The Golden Apple Foundation has provided a stipend of \$2,000 for participation in the Summer Institute. The students will also receive a scholarship awarded by Golden Apple through the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. The minimum amount of the scholarship is \$5,000 per year for two years.

"Two years ago, the Golden Apple Foundation and Kohl Children's Museum joined National-Louis University in a collaboration that has resulted in the creation of an Early Childhood Education program that is unique in the state of Illinois," explains Barbara Leys, Ed.D., director of undergraduate programs in early childhood and assistant professor at National-Louis University. "Specially selected candidates are receiving financial and academic support provided by the three partner organizations that will enable them to participate in this program."

Leys adds, "Through a variety of experiences, candidates will be able to apply what they are learning in their education coursework to their work with children and families in a variety of settings. Candidates will be mentored in preprimary and primary classrooms, by teachers who have been recognized by the Golden Apple Foundation as being outstanding educators and, in addition, they will also be working with children and families in an alternative setting at the Kohl Children's Museum. It is exciting for everyone involved that these candidates are beginning this program over the summer."

For more information about this program, please contact Barbara Leys at 312.261.3553, [BLEys@nl.edu](mailto:BLEys@nl.edu), or follow this link: <http://www.nl.edu/ecescholars/>. For information on enrollment, please contact Patti Duda at 847.947.5112, [PDuda@nl.edu](mailto:PDuda@nl.edu).



### **About National-Louis University**

National-Louis University began as a teacher of teachers; teaching remains not just the university's strength, but its calling. In 1886, founder Elizabeth Harrison took the idea of early childhood education and built around it one of the first four-year colleges for teachers. Today, in the process of educating students, faculty in the National College of Education, College of Arts and Sciences and College of Management and Business continue to act on some of the most urgent problems of our time and our society. They are innovators, animated by an intense dedication to their students and a commitment to building more effective and more caring schools, communities and societies.

### **About Golden Apple**

Celebrating its 25th 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-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, this nonprofit organization works to ensure that all Illinois children have the excellent teachers they deserve.

### **About Kohl Children's Museum**

Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago, located on The Glen in Glenview, Illinois, is the only museum in the Chicagoland area to exclusively focus on providing interactive, hands-on exhibits for children ages birth to 8. All of the Museum's exhibits and programs are aligned to the Illinois State Learning Standards and are designed to nurture a love of learning in young children through engaging them in self-directed complex play. The 46,700 sq. ft. facility boasts 16 permanent exhibits, including Water Works, Dominick's Supermarket, Car Care, Pet Vet, Music Makers, and Nature Explorers. In addition, Habitat Park, a two-acre outdoor exhibit, features climbing structures, a prairie grass maze, an underground tunnel and a nine-piece sculpture trail.

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