



Golden Apple

Transforming Teachers and Teaching

Organization Fact Sheet

About Golden Apple

Golden Apple is a non-profit organization that works to inspire, develop and support teacher excellence in Illinois, especially in schools of need. Because the critical contributor to student achievement is the quality of the teacher in the classroom, Golden Apple is dedicated to providing exceptional preparation for teachers at all stages of their careers. The organization's innovative programs build on one another to transform teachers and teaching, enriching student and teacher lives.

- **Recruiting and preparing prospective teachers for immediate and enduring success:** Through the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois program, Golden Apple identifies motivated future educators with diverse backgrounds and helps them achieve their dreams to teach. Golden Apple provides Scholars with extensive preparation and mentoring, both during and after college, to ensure that they achieve lasting success in challenging teaching environments.
- **Recognizing and empowering excellent teachers to extend their influence:** Through the high-profile Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching, Golden Apple recognizes and rewards outstanding teachers. As members of the Golden Apple Academy of Educators, these superior teachers apply their talents to further the Golden Apple mission.
- **Providing professional development resources for positive change:** Through focused, systemic professional development of the highest quality, Golden Apple fosters high achievement within the education community. Through the Inquiry Science Institute, a two-year partnership with the teachers in 18 Chicago Public Schools, Golden Apple is transforming science teaching and learning.

History of Golden Apple

Golden Apple began in 1985 with one couple and a shared inspiration — to offer outstanding teachers the level of recognition enjoyed by actors at the Academy Awards. Martin and Patricia Koldyke (Mike and Pat) quickly secured the interest and partnership of Chicago public television station WTTW and Northwestern University.

- In 1986, the first Golden Apple Awards ceremony broadcast the exceptional work of 10 Chicago-area teachers.
- In 1989, Golden Apple launched the Scholars of Illinois program for pre-service teachers and the Science Workshop for veteran teachers.
- In 1993, Illinois Governor Jim Edgar approved legislation expanding the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois program statewide, supporting tuition assistance for a larger group of Scholars. The annual Scholar class size grew from 15 to 60 Scholars.

- In 1997, Golden Apple held the first annual CORE (Center for Ongoing Renewal and Enrichment) professional development conference for teaching Scholars.
- In 1998, Golden Apple introduced alternative teacher certification to Illinois through legislation. The Golden Apple Teacher Education (GATE) program helped more than 400 mid-career adults become teachers before transitioning to a consultancy to other alternative certification programs in 2007.
- In 2001, Golden Apple's annual Scholar class size reached 100, and the program was among 15 nationwide finalists for the Innovation in Government award.
- In 2010, Golden Apple launched the Inquiry Science Institute, a two-year program to transform science instruction in cohorts of CPS partner schools.

Golden Apple's Importance

Teacher quality and classroom practice clearly affect student achievement. The impact can equal or even exceed student socioeconomic status.¹ Yet children from poverty, in schools with limited resources, are most likely to go without quality educators.² Without the benefit of quality instruction, American students, and the nation's economy, are in jeopardy.

Annually, nearly one-third of high school students fail to graduate within four years. Only half of public school students in the nation's largest cities receive diplomas.³ Individuals with less than a high school diploma earn 67 percent of what high school graduates earn and 36 percent of what college graduates bring home.⁴ Education influences the housing market, consumer spending, tax revenues, business performance, gross domestic product, and many other aspects of economic health.

Golden Apple's Impact

In more than 25 years, Golden Apple has:

- Welcomed more than 1,700 motivated future teachers into the Scholars program, providing preparation and mentoring to ensure teaching success in Illinois schools of need.
- Recognized 260 exceptional teachers with Golden Apple Awards and involved them in the Golden Apple mission.
- Directly influenced the teaching practices of more than 5,000 educators and indirectly touched thousands more through professional development programs.

¹ Research published in the peer-reviewed journal *Education Policy Analysis*

² The Education Trust

³ America's Promise Alliance

⁴ Alliance for Excellent Education