



GOLDEN APPLE UPDATE

March 2007

Teaching Scholars Receive Aquin Guild Award

Three of the four recipients of the 2006 Aquin Guild Outstanding New Teacher Awards are Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois. The Aquin Guild is the official Catholic Archdiocesan Organization for men and women working in education.

Pictured below from the left are Teaching Scholars Salvador Venegas, Little Village Infinity High School; Derrick Svelnys, Rickover Naval Academy; Golden Apple Fellow Phyllis O'Connell of the Aquin Guild; and Teaching Scholar Shawna Epich, Chicago International Charter School, Longwood Campus.

The awards were presented at a luncheon at the Gold Coast Room of The Drake Hotel.



Dear Friends,

Since day one of 2007, work at Golden Apple — not only for our perennial joys of selecting Scholars and Fellows and planning for their celebrations — but for our new strategic ventures as well, has moved into hyper drive! The Golden Apple staff has thrown itself passionately into their work and we have much to report.



Business plans for expanding the Scholars of Illinois program, articulating what the Teaching Excellence Center will become, and launching Golden Apple Central Illinois have been written. The plans are impressive, detailed, visionary documents that will define and even redefine Golden Apple as an organization representing the voice of excellent teaching in Illinois and a champion of improving the educational experience of deserving children. Planned changes to the TEN website (teachingexcellencenetwork.org) and the Golden Apple website (goldenapple.org) will further indicate the positive improvements we envision and the outreach we will extend to our Golden Apple family and beyond to help us achieve these goals.

One major change planned for the 22nd Annual Golden Apple Awards on May 12 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago will be to recognize Teachers of Distinction, finalists in addition to the IO award winners who our Selection Committee note as showing exceptional promise. In past years, our selection search has uncovered many terrific teachers who, because of the strength of the field or their stage of development as teachers, were not named Fellows of the Golden Apple Academy of Educators, but showed outstanding contribution and promise none the less.

Since Golden Apple recognizes excellent teaching, especially in the superb examples evidenced by our Golden Apple Fellows, it seems proper to me to also appropriately acknowledge those whose contributions to the profession are particularly noteworthy. This inclusion further expands the capability of the Golden Apple family. Such Teachers of Distinction may be invited to help us further our mission by participating in our activities.

By little gestures and massive plans, Golden Apple furthers its reputation and increases its influence. Those of you who claim kinship to our organization do so as well with every gesture and decision you make on behalf of children and their improved education. Bless you for doing so, continue to make your mark, and keep your eye on and heart with Golden Apple as we continue our noble work.

Dominic Belmonte
President and CEO

Superior teaching

By Glenn "Max" McGee
Golden Apple Board Chair

This Letter to the Editor ran in the Chicago Tribune on Feb. 17. Read the full text on our website at www.goldenapple.org.)

The Tribune's recent editorial series stresses that any new money for schools must be spent in a manner that will improve student performance. It further notes that "nothing in a school affects student performance as much as superior teaching." Connecting the dots, we at the Golden Apple Foundation contend that the first nickel of any new revenue should be directed to assure that all children, especially the children of the poor, have excellent teachers. Poor, minority children are far less likely to experience superior teaching. This has to change....

We are doing our best to make that happen. Though we are primarily known for rewarding the very best teachers in the Chicagoland area, our core business is identifying, training and retaining a cadre of exceptional teachers, our Golden Apple Scholars, to work in the toughest schools. We select high school students from across Illinois who show both great promise as teachers and an uncommon commitment to underserved communities.... [We] provide modest scholarships, extensive summer training and continued support after they start teaching. Excellence is forged through three times the practice teaching experience most pre-service teachers receive as well as additional summer training from the best teachers in Illinois.... In urban schools of need, only 25 percent of new teachers are still teaching in hard-to-staff schools after five years while more than 75 percent of the Scholars are successfully teaching in these challenging classrooms. Moreover 60 percent of the scholars are minority teachers, compared with 15 percent statewide. They have a powerful impact on the lives of the children.

The Scholars program receives \$2.9 million in the state budget. We use this to begin working with 100 new teachers each year while supporting 300 current college students in addition to 200 recent graduates. At Golden Apple our dream is to double that number so a cadre of 200 teachers every year infuses struggling schools with superior teaching.

On the calendar

Saturday, March 31, 2007

Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois induction at The Field Museum.

Saturday, May 12, 2007

Golden Apple Awards Ceremony and Gala at the Hyatt Regency Chicago Hotel

July 30 - August 3

2007 CORE Conference. The annual professional-development conference for teachers will run July 30 through August 3 at Saint Xavier University, 3700 W. 103rd St. in Chicago



Glenn "Max" McGee

New tax law promotes IRA donations

Supporters of Golden Apple now can make significant contributions by distributing IRA funds with no tax consequences. According to a new law enacted on August 17, 2006, donors over the age of 70½, who are required by law to make annual distributions from their IRA, can direct all or part of their account to Golden Apple as a qualified charitable distribution. While none of the distribution is included in the donor's income, it does count towards the required minimum annual distribution for a donor's IRA account. Contributions of up to \$100,000 per year are eligible. As part of the Pension Protection Act of 2006, the law is set to expire on December 31, 2007, so donors, investors, and charitable organizations have a limited time to take advantage of it.

Golden Apple strongly encourages our friends to take advantage of the IRA Charitable Rollover law, and hope that you will consider it as a means of continuing your support of us this year. For more information about the IRA Charitable Rollover, please visit <http://www.independentsector.org/programs/gr/IRARollover.html>

Golden Apple Award winners to be named in March

Ten winners of the 2007 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in teaching in grades 9 through 12 will be announced in March. They will be selected from 32 finalists, who were chosen from 803 teachers from Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and Will counties nominated for the award, which was first presented in 1986. This was the first year teachers in Kane and Will counties were eligible.

The winners will be honored at an awards ceremony on May 12 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, which subsequently will be aired as a one-hour prime-time special on WTTW/Channel 11.

Each of the 10 Golden Apple Award winners will receive a tuition-free fall-term sabbatical at Northwestern University, a personal computer, \$3,000, and membership in the Golden Apple Academy, which has inducted 210 expert teachers in the past 21 years to ensure that all children have the excellent teachers they deserve.

The 32 finalists include 21 Cook County teachers, 12 from Chicago schools and nine from the suburbs (**Chicago**: Best Practice, Clemente, Curie, Gage Park, Jones, Lane Tech, Lindblom, Morgan Park, Northside, Payton, St. Ignatius, and UofC Lab; Suburban: Evanston Township (**Evanston**), Fenwick (**Oak Park**), Marian Catholic (**Chicago Heights**), New Trier (**Winnetka**), Niles North (**Skokie**), Oak Park and River Forest (**Oak Park**), Proviso East, (**Maywood**), Thornton (**Dolton**), and **Wheeling**; five DuPage County teachers from Glenbard East (**Lombard**), Glenbard South (**Glen Ellyn**), Hinsdale Central (**Hinsdale**), Hinsdale South (**Darien**), and Willowbrook (**Villa Park**); three Kane County teachers from **East Aurora**, **Geneva**, and **South Elgin**; two Lake County teachers from **Deerfield** and **Lake Forest Academy**; and one Will County teacher from Lincoln-Way Central (**New Lenox**).

The complete list of finalists is posted at www.goldenapple.org.