



Golden Apple



TRANSFORMING TEACHERS AND TEACHING

News | April 2011

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New Best Practices

Access and share the newest [Best Practices](#) from *Golden Apple Teachers*, an online resource featuring the best that Golden Apple Fellows, Scholars, Teachers of Distinction, and GATE teachers have to offer:

- Find 1999 Fellow and Scholars Program Director Jim Sorensen's [tips for passing the Illinois Basic Skills Test](#), for pre-service teachers and their mentors.
- View 2007 Golden Apple Fellow David Derbes' [resources for teachers as science scholars](#).

Be A Guest (Blogger)!

We launched the [Golden Apple Blog](#) to share views and stories that affect and reflect teacher quality in Illinois. Do you have something to say to the Illinois teaching community? Let us know if you

Golden Apple Welcomes 110 New Scholars

On April 9, at the 2011 Induction Ceremony for Golden Apple Scholars, 110 promising young people began their journey to become exceptional teachers in Illinois schools of need. Golden Apple teachers and staff helped to select and interview these candidates from more than 1,600 nominees and 400 completed applications.

Of the 110 students selected as 2011 Golden Apple Scholars:



- 62% are from the first generation of their family to attend college
- 45% come from low-income families
- 40% are Caucasian, 31% are Latino, 20% are African-American, 3% are Asian/Pacific Islander, and 6% are Multi-Racial
- 35% are from Chicago, 32% are from the Chicago suburbs and collar counties, and 33% are from other areas of Illinois

The [Scholars program](#) is designed to address the urgent need for resilient and creative teachers serving Illinois students in economically and educationally disadvantaged schools.

See the full list of [Golden Apple's newest Scholars](#): an inspiring group of motivated, future teachers.

"Being a teacher is more than just a title. With proper ingredients, a teacher can encourage social change. A change that is unimaginable."

- Karina Arroyo, 2011 Scholar

"Teaching is a shared experience for the teacher and the student that leaves a lasting imprint on both of their lives. ...I will show [my students] that someone cares about them, that they are not alone, and that they can succeed."

- Sean Pettiford, 2011 Scholar

would like to be a guest blogger—contact [Mary Lester](#). Visit the blog to read and comment on recent posts, including thoughts by Golden Apple's Dom Belmonte on teacher excellence, character, and evaluations.

Congratulations!

...to 1993 Golden Apple Scholar and 2006 Fellow Zio Perez. She is one of three Chicago-area educators recently selected to receive a 2011 Kohl McKormick Early Childhood Teaching Award. [See the video.](#)

New Scholar in the News

Read the inspiring story of Will Haley, a 2011 Scholar. "[Golden Apple Scholar dreams of being a teacher and helping others in Cabrini, public housing](#)," *Chicago Tribune*, April 11.

Mentors Help Teaching Scholars Excel in Early Years

Mary Farmer understands how Golden Apple Scholars may feel on the first day of a first teaching job.

"They graduate from college. They leave the four-year structure of the Summer Institutes of Golden Apple. They have great lesson plans, and they've been taught the best practices. They've got everything in perfect order. Now they are totally alone," she said. "That responsibility, no matter how prepared and confident a teacher is, can be overwhelming."



That's why the Golden Apple Scholars program provides valuable mentoring to Scholars in their early years of teaching, in addition to the preparation and classroom experience provided to "pre-service" teachers. Mary is the newest addition to a small mentoring staff who support Teaching Scholars at Golden Apple. The team also includes Carolyn Cyriaque, a 1996 Fellow, and Jozel Shwatal, a 1994 Scholar. All three work closely with Scholars Program Director Jim Sorensen.

Mary received a Golden Apple Award in 1989. She taught for 34 years before retiring last year and has long been involved with the Scholars program. She's led Reflective Seminars at the Summer Institute for first-year Scholars. For the past eight years, she has co-led the fourth-year Summer Institute, a final "preparation" for graduating Scholars.

Golden Apple's mentoring support emphasizes the first teaching year—beginning with a day-long visit in the first few months and periodic follow-up to address Scholar questions, offer resources, and share good ideas. Classroom management and time management are among the issues Mary often sees new teachers face.

"Sometimes they are a little afraid to try something different," said Mary. "Especially if they have some people who say, 'Oh, you can't do that with these kids.' We work with them to say, 'Yes you can, we'll help you try.' We want them to understand they have a huge support system. ...When they really feel empowered in their position, they can share that with the students."

Mary has worked with 20 Scholars since September and looks forward to continuing those relationships and meeting new Scholars on the job.

"Teaching is really a collaboration, and you get your best efforts when you collaborate," she said.

Selection Committee Picks 31 Finalists

Golden Apple congratulates [31 finalists](#) for the 2011 Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching. These finalists, all teachers of students in grades 4 - 8,

were selected from a pool of 185 applicants and more than 600 nominees. (Annual awards focus on a rotating group of grade levels.)

The 2011 Golden Apple Awards finalists include:

- Two Golden Apple Teaching Scholars
- 11 National Board Certified Teachers
- 24 Cook County teachers (including 17 Chicago Public School teachers), one DuPage County teacher, and six Lake County teachers
- Three charter school teachers
- Two independent/private school teachers

In the next month, Golden Apple's Selection Committee—distinguished retired teachers, higher education professionals, administrators, former Golden Apple Award recipients, and staff—will choose 10 Award recipients from among these 31 finalists. Classroom observations of all Award finalists, and interviews with colleagues, supervisors, students, and parents, will guide this final step. Recipients will be honored at the 2011 Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching on October 21st and join Golden Apple's Academy of Educators.

Since the program's inception in 1985, 250 teachers in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and Will counties have earned Golden Apple Awards. In addition, a cohort of 10 teachers from Central Illinois was inducted into the Golden Apple Academy in 2008.

Join Us at our April 16 Celebration of Excellence!

Golden Apple's Board of Directors and the Academy of Educators invites the teaching community and all those with a passion for education to attend the 21st Annual Golden Apple Celebration of Excellence, recognizing the accomplishments of the 31 finalists for the 2011 Golden Apple Awards.

[Purchase tickets online now](#), while space is available. The event, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Chicago's Hyatt McCormick Place, will feature:

- A keynote address by Cheryl Watkins, principal at John J. Pershing West Elementary Magnet School and a 1991 Golden Apple Fellow
- Radio personality Marti Jones, morning show co-host at WLS-94.7 FM, as emcee

Entertainment by the Providence St. Mel School Choir, under the direction of 2010 Golden Apple Fellow Dr. David Baar, and a performance by Mather High School drama students, directed by 2001 Scholar Mary Beth Belmonte-Kordik.

2010 Fellows Enjoy Learning on Teaching Sabbaticals

The 2010 Golden Apple Award winners began their spring semester sabbaticals at the end of March. This paid sabbatical offers the opportunity for these 10 outstanding teachers to explore their passions in education as students again. Fellows can take as many courses as they want in any subjects they choose at Northwestern University, in Evanston, Illinois, and pursue other projects.



Several Fellows are taking classes in storytelling and on the City of Chicago. Susan Harsa is working to enhance her expertise in instructional technology. Jacob Gourley is enrolled in a class on the Supreme Court that will view a court proceeding in Washington, D.C. and meet with Justice Sonia Sotomayor. David Baar is observing and meeting with other outstanding teachers in his field and has already found ideas to take back to his students from Carol Broos, a 2008 Golden Apple Fellow. Aaron Reedy is pursuing field research in Florida with Dr. Dan Warner of Iowa State, capturing, marking, and releasing hundreds of lizards on nine different islands as part of a study of evolutionary influences. He's keeping four different classrooms, in Chicago and in Washington, D.C., informed via live chats and [blogging](#) about the project.

Throughout their sabbaticals at weekly Golden Apple Seminar meetings, Fellows share their experiences and pursue an ongoing discussion about education reform. What kinds of schools can best serve students? How can Fellows make their expertise more widely available to the education community? Watch for an update on the outcome of this seminar and more details on individual experiences after sabbaticals end in early June.

Scientists to Visit ISI Schools May 12

The first National Lab Day, last year on May 12, connected working science professionals with primary and secondary schools to bring new discovery-based experiences into the classroom. That nationwide initiative, now known as National Lab Network (NLN), continues to foster such collaborative relationships. Golden Apple is working to bring this concept to Inquiry Science Institute partner schools on May 12, 2011, as a way to help each school become more science-infused and to show students career options they may never have considered.

"The excitement of having an outside expert come into the school says to the entire community that science is important, and that 'our school is a school that's interested in science,'" said Golden Apple's Penny Lundquist. "Giving the kids an actual experience with someone who is a science professional might also light a little spark."

Through an NLN connection, one volunteer with health expertise has already made several visits to Jackson Elementary to do health activities with students. Golden Apple also has volunteer commitments from Mike Davis, Chair of the Physical Science Department at Harold Washington College and host of the WYCC Channel 20 television program "City Science," Joel Voss, who studies the human brain and memory at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science, and Mary Carroll, with Chicago's Metropolitan Water Reclamation District. Fermilab is interested in sending several scientists to ISI schools.

STEM professionals with interest in bringing hands-on experience to one of Golden Apple's 18 ISI partner schools should contact [Penny Lundquist](#).

Save the Date(s) for CORE: July 26 - 29

Each summer, Golden Apple holds a four- to five-day CORE Conference at [Saint Xavier University](#) in Chicago. Teaching Scholars and colleagues from across the state come to stay connected and enrich their professional lives. CORE 2011 will take place July 26 – 29. Save the date, and watch for [more information online](#).

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