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For Immediate Release

AWARD WINNING SCHOOLS TO RECEIVE \$20,000 CHARACTER EDUCATION GRANTS

Character Education Partnership selects ten winners to be honored in November

May 21, 2007 . . . Washington, DC – The Character Education Partnership (CEP) has named nine schools and one school district as 2007 National Schools of Character in its prestigious annual awards program.

“We are very proud to announce this diverse group of exemplary schools,” said CEP Executive Director, Joe Mazzola. “While their character education initiatives and student populations are very different, these schools are *all* places where students learn the meaning of core virtues, the importance of service, and acceptance of others.”

Each winner will receive an award, national recognition, and a \$20,000 grant at CEP’s 14th National Forum on Character Education. The theme for the event is “*Investing in America’s Future*.” It will be held November 1–3, 2007, in Arlington, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C.

Having demonstrated the success of their initiatives through the rigorous application and screening process, winners use their grants to serve as national leaders and models for other schools and districts seeking to improve their character education efforts.

“This year’s NSOC application process was more competitive than ever before. There were 133 applicants from across the nation,” said Janice Stoodley, National Schools of Character Director. “The winning schools are truly the best of the best in character education.”

CEP’s Blue Ribbon Panel of experts in the field of character education selected 10 winners from the 25 finalists on the strength of their applications as well as site visit reports. All demonstrated outstanding work in encouraging the ethical, social, and academic growth of their students through effective character education. *CEP’s Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education*, which defines excellence in character education, guides the evaluation and selection of winners, as does the goal of the NSOC program to provide a variety of models to schools and districts across the nation.

2007 National Schools of Character award winners

Birmingham Covington School (grades 3–8), Bloomfield Hills, MI

In this public science and technology magnet school where students regularly excel academically, students also learn to care for one another just as their teachers care for them. All readily attest to the overriding sense of caring and cooperation present from day to day.

Contact: Dale Truding, dt02bps@birmingham.k12.mi.us, (248) 203-4428

Boys Town High School (grades 9–12), Boys Town, NE

Students at Boys Town, part of the well-known residential treatment center west of Omaha, Nebraska, speak openly about the difference the school has made in their lives. Most of the school's at-risk teens have failed in three previous placements before coming to Boys Town.

Contact: Daniel Daly, dalyd@girlsandboystown.org, (402) 498-1894

Fairbrook Elementary School (grades K–5), Beavercreek, OH

Located 20 minutes from the center of Dayton, Ohio, Fairbrook is highly regarded for its inclusive model of education. Students with special needs are integrated in all aspects of the school and teachers work hard to ensure that all children are valued for their special gifts.

Contact: Barbara Rhea, barbara.rhea@beavercreek.k12.oh.us, (937) 429-7616

Memorial Middle School (grades 6–8), Fairlawn, NJ

Thirty miles from New York City, students in this middle school acclaimed for its character education programs learn compassion and acceptance of others. In the process, they learn to feel good about themselves as they are reminded each day of their potential to have a positive impact.

Contact: Laurianne Brunetti, lbrunetti@fairlawnschools.org, (201) 794-5479

Newport Mill Middle School (grades 6–8), Kensington, MD

One of the poorest schools in an affluent suburb of Washington, DC, Newport Mill is a good example of high poverty students who are succeeding. Staff members are so committed to having a caring environment that they often call students before school to encourage them to attend.

Contact: Nelson McLeod, nelson_mcleod@mcpsmd.org, (301) 929-2244

Pine Point School (grades PreK–9), Stonington, CT

A private school, Pine Point is an educational community that clearly demonstrates excellence in academics *and* character. Students are involved in carefully planned, developmentally appropriate service-learning projects that provide them with the opportunity to give back.

Contact: Paul G. Geise, pgg@pinepoint.org, (860) 535-0606

Pinellas County Schools (grades K–12), Largo, FL

This large, diverse, urban school district works strategically to disseminate character education practices to its 145 schools while still respecting their autonomy. Even bus drivers have been trained to apply core values, resulting in a remarkable 64 percent decrease in behavior problems.

Contact: Claudia Hunter, hunterc@pcsb.org, (727) 588-6119

Radix Elementary School (grades PreK–4), Williamstown, NJ

Students at Radix used to be extrinsically rewarded for exhibiting good character until teacher focus groups found that “extrinsic rewards just don’t work.” Their new philosophy stresses the positive feeling, the intrinsic reward that comes from exhibiting good character.

Contact: Christine Gehringer, cgehringer@monroetwp.k12.nj.us, (856) 728-1094

Sacred Hearts Academy (grades PreK–12), Honolulu, HI

This Catholic all-girls school, a short trip from Hawaii’s Waikiki Beach, has a nearly century-long history of educating for character. Sacred Hearts students take pride in their beautiful, welcoming school, even voluntarily staying after school to clean classrooms.

Contact: Katherine Miller, srkfmiller@sacredhearts.org, (808) 734-5058

Skyview Elementary School (grades PreK–5), Lizella, GA

Building good character is clearly the prime mission of Skyview Elementary, located about an hour and a half from Atlanta. The evidence is everywhere, even in the cafeteria. Two students from each class leave early for lunch shift in order to serve as hosts and hostesses for their tables.

Contact: Gail Gilbert, ggilbert@bibb.k12.ga.us, (478) 779-4000

NSOC awards program

Each year since 1998, the NSOC awards program has recognized K–12 schools and districts that provide exemplary comprehensive character education programs that consistently yield positive results in student behavior, citizenship, school climate, and academic performance. The national awards program is sponsored and administered by the Character Education Partnership and made possible by generous support from the John Templeton Foundation and the UAW-GM Center for Human Resources.

Character Education Partnership

The Character Education Partnership, based in Washington, D.C., is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to developing young people of good character who become responsible and caring citizens. CEP is the nation’s leading advocate for quality character education initiatives. To learn more about CEP and the National Schools of Character, visit www.character.org.

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