

## **Outstanding Educators Receive Awards Totaling \$105,000**

On Oct. 19, educators from Minnesota received \$15,000 awards from the WEM Foundation at the 15th Annual WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Brunch held at the Oak Ridge Conference Center in Chaska.

Educators and academic coaches from Marshall, West St. Paul, Rochester, Burnsville and Cold Spring were recognized for their outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student achievement.

Two honorees were named in each of three categories: The Teacher Achievement Award recognizes exemplary teachers who support, inspire and assist students to attain greater learning as evidenced by student achievement; the Academic Challenge Coach of the Year Award recognizes classroom teachers who are exemplary coaches of student teams that participate and compete in academic challenges endorsed by the Minnesota Academic League Council; and the Ethics in Education Award recognizes exemplary educators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom or school activities, policies or curriculum. In addition, this year the WEM Foundation presented the Excellence in Education Award, which recognizes superior contributions of educators whose leadership and dedication inspire a spirit of learning in students of all backgrounds and abilities outside the traditional education system and classroom.

### **The 2013 WEM Foundation Outstanding Educator Award honorees are:**

#### ***Teacher Achievement Award:***

Marty Brandl is a mathematics teacher at Marshall High School in the Marshall Public Schools district. He has been teaching for 10 years. Brandl believes miracles happen every day in his classroom when students are continually encouraged and pushed to be the best they can be. He feels his teaching is the culmination of his supportive family and of all the great educators he works alongside.

Terese Trekell is a kindergarten teacher at Gideon Pond Elementary in the Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School district. Trekell has been teaching for 22 years. She feels as a teacher, her influence has the ability to change lives every day. Trekell works every day in her classroom to teach her students to love everything about school. She wants all of us to be the change we want to see in the world.

#### ***Academic Challenge Coach Award:***

Joyce Baumann is a kindergarten teacher at Cold Spring Elementary in the ROCORI School district. Baumann has been teaching and coaching for 17 years and currently coaches Knowledge Bowl. She feels education is a humbling profession and remarks being humbled by her students. Baumann refers to herself as an ordinary person who just happens to have a job that she absolutely loves. She feels truly honored to be called a teacher and coach.

Amanda Meyer is a teacher at Springfield High School in Springfield. Meyer has been teaching and coaching for 10 years and currently teaches biology, ecology and anatomy, and coaches Envirothon, Junior FIRST LEGO League, Knowledge Bowl, Science Bowl and Youth Energy Summit(YES!). Meyer has found in her years of coaching that students discover their true passion in life by their involvement in non-traditional extracurricular activities. She feels every student deserves the opportunity to find and hone their passion. Meyer plans to donate a portion of her award to installing Wi-Fi in school district buses so students in extracurricular activities can always be tuned in.

#### ***Ethics in Education Award:***

Debbi Krohn is a kindergarten teacher from Garlough Environmental Magnet School in the West St. Paul–Mendota Heights–Eagan Area Schools. Debbi has been teaching for 13 years. Krohn looks at this honor as a shared one with all teachers and educators who strive for excellence. She has always kept animals in the classroom to help her students learn to take care of others. Krohn plans to donate a portion of her award to funding additional animals for the school.

Monica Bowler is a principal at Friedell Middle School in the Rochester Public Schools. She has been an educator for 31 years. Monica remarked about learning to read from her older brother at the age of four, which instilled a love of literacy at a young age. This fueled her passion to get degrees to teach literature in both English and Spanish. She believes when you teach children to read you give them a life. And when you fail to, you take away life.

#### ***Excellence in Education Award:***

Siah St. Clair, who was the keynote speaker, was surprised with the Excellence in Education Award. St. Clair retired in May after 41 years of serving environmental education centers; 35 of those years spent as director of Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley. St. Clair's presented on his experience with the nature center collaboration with local schools to bring hands-on experimental learning to students of all ages. When the time came to announce the Excellence in Education award recipient, St. Clair had no idea it was meant for him! After gathering his thoughts, he remarked on his 41 years as always being fun and how his passion for teaching was driven by his level of curiosity. He feels when you can show your passion and use it all the time to help others, it makes work enjoyable for all involved.

The WEM Outstanding Educator Awards program was created by the WEM Foundation and is administered by Synergy & Leadership Exchange (Synergy) in partnership with The Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSC). The WEM Foundation supports teachers and acknowledges their important role in helping all children achieve academically. The awards program, now in its 15th year, has helped recognize education's often "unsung heroes," educators who meet the challenges and opportunities of teaching in a variety of settings.

Educators are nominated for the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program by students, parents, colleagues or community members. Those who accept the nomination provide additional information for review and consideration by Synergy & Leadership Exchange and a blue ribbon selection panel, which reviews and ranks the nominees.

In addition to the seven statewide honorees, five additional educators were honored earlier this year as 2013 regional honorees and each received a \$1,500 award and a trophy.

For more information on the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program and Synergy & Leadership Exchange, visit [www.synergyexchange.org](http://www.synergyexchange.org).

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