

June 10, 2013  
For immediate release

For additional information:  
Joyce Swenson, Synergy & Leadership Exchange  
Phone: 507-389-2461

## Twelve Outstanding Educators Receive Awards Totaling \$99,000

Synergy & Leadership Exchange has announced that educators and academic coaches from **Burnsville-Eagan-Savage, Marshall, Rochester, ROCORI, Springfield, West St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale**, school districts have been named as this year's honorees and recipients of \$15,000 awards from the WEM Foundation in recognition of their outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student achievement.

Two honorees are named in each of three categories: **Teacher Achievement Awards**, recognizing exemplary teachers who support, inspire and assist students to attain greater learning as evidenced by student achievement; **Academic Challenge Coach Awards**, recognizing classroom teachers who are exemplary coaches of student teams who participate and compete in academic challenges endorsed by the Minnesota Academic League; and **Ethics in Education Awards**, recognizing exemplary educators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom or school activities, policies or curriculum.

The 2012 WEM Foundation Outstanding Educator Award honorees are:

### **Teacher Achievement Award:**

**Marty Brandl** is a math teacher from Marshall High School, Marshall, MN in the Marshall Public Schools. He has been teaching for 10 years. Brandl incorporates many aspects of technology into his classroom and has had the opportunity to share this knowledge with colleagues in the Marshall schools and regionally in southwestern Minnesota. His principal said, "Marty has worked hard to raise the academic level of the students in our building through his work in the classroom; specifically through his innovative ideas as how to integrate technology into his classroom for the betterment of his students."

**Terese Trekell** is a kindergarten teacher from Gideon Pond Elementary, Burnsville, MN in the Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Schools. She has been teaching for 22 years. In addition to her teaching, Trekell serves on the building leadership team, district leadership team, district kindergarten curriculum committee and as a teacher representative on the Parent Teacher Organization. She also teaches a class to parents of students birth to age four, to prepare their children for kindergarten. A parent told us, "Being a teacher is what Terese is created for; she knows it and gives 100% to her calling. I am amazed by her determination and purpose!"

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

**Joyce Baumann** is a kindergarten teacher at Cold Spring Elementary, Cold Spring, MN in the ROCORI Area School District and is a Knowledge Bowl coach. She has been teaching and coaching for 18 years. A colleague shared, "Mrs. Baumann promotes full participation – no one is left out. Her teams have included students with learning problems, physical disabilities and management problems. She takes them all and molds them into a productive team with her caring, patient and energetic approach."

**Amanda Meyer** is biology, ecology and anatomy teacher at Springfield High School, Springfield, MN in the Springfield Public Schools and coaches Envirothon, Junior FIRST LEGO League, Knowledge Bowl, Science Bowl and Youth Energy Summit. She has been teaching and coaching for 10 years. Her superintendent told us, "Mrs. Meyer's energy and enthusiasm for the academic teams she coaches has been a catalyst for strong participation, growth and excellent results. Amanda's ability to motivate, inspire and impact her students, our school and the Springfield community is transparent."

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

**Monica Bowler** is principal of Friedell Middle School, Rochester, MN in the Rochester Public Schools. She has been in education for 31 years; 14 years in administration and 17 years mostly as a Spanish teacher. Bowler tells her staff, "Your career in modeling began the same day as your career in education." She and her staff lead by example through fun and

memorable ways. A parent told us, “Friedell students strive to live up to the high expectations of their principal, in both their learning and their life, knowing that they really matter to her and that she believes in them.”

**Deborah Krohn** is a kindergarten teacher at Garlough Environmental Magnet School, West St. Paul, MN in the West St. Paul – Mendota Heights – Eagan Area Schools. She has been teaching for 13 years. Krohn is passionate about equity training and has been a Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED) staff trainer since 2005. Her principal shared, “Debbi holds colleagues accountable for maintaining high expectations for all students regardless of their socio economic level, first language or racial background.”

The WEM 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 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" and educators who meet the challenges and opportunities of teaching in a variety of settings.

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

In addition to the six statewide honorees, six additional educators have been named as 2013 regional honorees and each will receive a \$1,500 award.

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

**Meredith Huikko** is a kindergarten teacher from Delano Elementary School, Delano Public Schools.

**Ulla Tervo-Desnick** is a first grade teacher at Expo Elementary, St. Paul Public Schools.

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

**Lois Johnson** is a Family and Consumer Science Teacher at Willow River High School, Willow River Independent School District and coaches LifeSmarts.

**Jodi Prchal** is a fifth grade teacher at Falcon Ridge Elementary, New Prague Area Schools and coaches Knowledge Bowl and Math Masters.

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

**Kelli Hanninen** is a fifth grade teacher at Rossman Elementary School, Detroit Lakes Public Schools.

**Gretchen Sage-Martinson** is a language arts teacher at Avalon School in St. Paul.

Synergy is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering collaboration to advance the development of ethical citizens, providing educational resources, and celebrating achievement and best practices in Minnesota schools, businesses and communities.

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