

Education News & Notes

Inspiration And Innovation Help Kids In The Classroom

(NAPSA)—America's teachers have come up with some great ways to help kids. These efforts, however, too often go unnoticed and unrewarded. Even the most innovative educational programs may get little recognition or needed funding.

Innovative teaching is more than just keeping up with the latest techniques. Teachers are constantly coming up with new ways to reach students and reconceptualize the classroom setting and the educational process.

For example, many schools have found that tablet PCs—touchscreen computers that can substitute for paper notebooks—are a great way to help keep students organized and on track, as well as give instructors the capability to enhance their lesson plans with animations and Web sites.

Now, some of the most inspirational teachers in the country are being honored for their efforts in educating our nation's youth. They and their schools have received grants to support these ingenious programs.

In one program, financial services company ING has been awarding grants of up to \$27,000 to teachers who have achieved milestones in creative pedagogy.

In cooperation with Scholarship America (formerly Citizen Scholarship Foundation to America), 100 finalists are selected each year to receive \$2,000 awards. Of the 100 finalists, three are selected for additional



Teacher Jennifer Wise, one of 100 educators recognized for innovative and inspiring teaching methods.

financial awards—an additional \$25,000 for first place, \$10,000 for second and \$5,000 for third—a total of \$240,000 awarded annually nationwide.

ING initiated the Unsung Heroes Awards in 1995, as a reflection of its commitment to the educational community. The awards are given to K-12 educators who submit applications describing projects they have initiated or would like to create. Their applications are judged on their innovative teaching methods, creative educational projects, and the educational benefits to students.

This year's top winner, Jennifer Wise of Tampa, Florida, was honored for her "Kids and Canines" program, which teaches truant, at-risk students life skills

such as commitment, flexibility, creativity, problem solving, teamwork, and the rewards of giving back to the community.

Begun five years ago, the "Kids and Canines" program pairs students with golden retriever puppies which they train. The dogs are then given to individuals with physical disabilities. Students who have taken part in "Kids and Canines" have shown a marked increase in their school attendance, reading level and math scores.

"There are so many teachers today who consistently go above and beyond to meet the needs of their students. They are creative, focused and innovative in their teaching strategies and in how they engage students," said Bill Jasien, Senior Vice President of ING U.S. Financial Services. "One of the great joys we experience in our work with teachers is seeing these remarkable programs first-hand."

Another winner, David Knight of Heath Springs, S.C., uses television to motivate students and teach a variety of skills. Knight's "Learn TV" is a broadcast journalism class where high school students work with adults to create programming for the government access channel. Students participate in all aspects of programming, from selecting content, to scripting and interviewing to production activities such as set design.

To learn more about the program or to get an application for 2004, go to www.ing.com/unsungheroes.