

EDUCATION NEWS AND NOTES

National Teacher Of The Year Places Emphasis On Community Literacy

(NAPSA)—Her childhood admiration of a day care teacher and her college summers spent working at a young children's day camp inspired Kimberly Oliver to become an educator. Since then, Oliver—a kindergarten teacher at Broad Acres Elementary School in Silver Spring, Md.—has devoted her life to building on these experiences, especially the one-on-one relationship forged between that special teacher and herself.

Oliver's community focus, teamwork with other teachers and desire to see all students succeed are just a few of the reasons that she was named 2006 National Teacher of the Year—an achievement for which she was recently honored by President George W. Bush at a White House ceremony.

"I adore working with children," Oliver said. "This experience helped to shape many of my beliefs about what children can do if someone believes in them. I knew then that I wanted to motivate and inspire the neediest students whom many have written off just because of the circumstances they were born into."

Educational Achievement

In her six years at Broad Acres, she has helped create and implement several programs to ensure consistency in curriculum, instruction and assessment throughout the school. As a result, her school made improvements on local, state and national tests, and in 2001 was the number one school in her school system for percentage increases in test scores. In 2003, 2004 and 2005, they met or exceeded all requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

To promote literacy throughout



Kimberly Oliver, a kindergarten teacher in Silver Spring, Md., was recently named 2006 National Teacher of the Year.

her community, Oliver helps sponsor "Books and Supper Night," a quarterly event that allows families to visit the school and check out books from the library. They read together, receive free books to continue family reading time at home and enjoy a communal dinner where they interact with and get to know their neighbors.

Working with colleagues, Oliver has also written and received grants to purchase electronic learning systems, tape players and books in English and Spanish to send home with students, taking the burden off of parents who struggle with language barriers or illiteracy.

National Program

The National Teacher of the Year Program focuses public attention on teaching excellence and is the oldest and most prestigious awards program for teachers. The program, sponsored by ING in partnership with Scholastic Inc., is a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

"We believe in the importance

of honoring excellence in education and want to help recognize those teachers who make a difference in the lives of children everyday," said Rhonda Mims, president of the ING Foundation. "We also believe it is important to support the entire education system, and give back in various ways to teachers, children and organizations through volunteer efforts, grants and sponsorships."

A committee of representatives from 14 national education organizations chooses the National Teacher of the Year from among the State Teachers of the Year, including those representing American Samoa, Department of Defense Education Activity, District of Columbia, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and U.S. Virgin Islands.

In addition to the National Teacher of the Year Program, ING honors education excellence through its ING Unsung Heroes program. This grant program recognizes K-12 educators for their innovative teaching methods, creative educational projects, and the ability to make a positive influence on the children they teach.

ING's primary objective is to help educators manage their financial resources, providing retirement programs and planning to hundreds of thousands of educators across the country. However, giving back to educators, in the classroom and in their communities, is also a high priority.

For additional information on the National Teacher of the Year Program, visit www.ccsso.org/ntoy. To learn more about ING and the company's commitment to education, visit www.ing.com/us.