



**Hillsborough
Education
Foundation**

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INAUGURAL AWARDS PROGRAM HONORS THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S TOP EDUCATORS AND EMPLOYEES

Who: Hillsborough Education Foundation, Hillsborough County Public Schools
What: 2010 Excellence in Education Awards
When: Thursday, January 28, 2010 Reception: 5:30pm, Awards: 7:00pm
Where: David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts, 1010 N.W.C. MacInnes Place Tampa 33602

(January 25, 2010) TAMPA – The Hillsborough Education Foundation and Hillsborough County Public Schools are proud to bring a new look to an old tradition. On Thursday, January 28 the county's Ida S. Baker Diversity Educator of the Year, Instructional Support Employee of the Year, and Teacher of the Year will be revealed at the inaugural Excellence in Education Awards. More than 2,500 school district employees, representatives, and guests will gather at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts to honor the 700 nominees who were selected as this year's best of the best.

The evening will not only feature the school district's exceptional faculty and staff, but also the talents of its students. The opening reception will be catered by students in the Culinary Arts programs of Sickles and Wharton High Schools. Hillsborough County students will also entertain throughout the night with a drum line, jazz band, and show choir. The awards ceremony will highlight the five finalists for each award, and culminate with the naming of the winners.

Caspers Company McDonald's Restaurants returns as the Founding Sponsor for the Teacher of the Year Award. They are joined by Amscot Financial, Presenting Sponsor of the Diversity Educator of the Year Award; and Suncoast Schools Federal Credit Union's Suncoast for Kids Foundation, Presenting Sponsor of the Instructional Support Employee and Teacher of the Year Awards.

The finalists for the Excellence in Education Awards are:

Ida S. Baker Diversity Educator of the Year: **Jené D. Bell**, Chamberlain High; **Kimberly A. Duran**, Foster Elementary; **Japera Helene Hodges**, Witter Elementary; **Michael L. Oliver**, Youth Services; **Karen Willis-Barrett**, Greco Middle.

Instructional Support Employee of the Year: **Susan Marie Blackmon**, Oak Park Elementary; **Julie Harris**, Broward Elementary; **Suzie Morse**, Chiles Elementary; **Valerie L. Pearce**, LaVoy Exceptional Center; **Kelly Jean Zelaya**, Stewart Middle Magnet.

Teacher of the Year: **Crystal Dukes**, Freedom High; **Ryan Kinser**, Turkey Creek Middle; **Emily Marrero**, Philip Shore Elementary; **Marcy Ringdahl**, Alafia Elementary; **Holly Sinclair**, Gorrie Elementary.

For more information about the Excellence in Education Awards, visit www.educationfoundation.com.

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Information on Hillsborough Education Foundation, Inc:

The Hillsborough Education Foundation is a 501(c) 3 charitable organization whose mission is to invest community resources to help students achieve academic success. The Foundation, now celebrating 20 years of serving the students, teachers and schools in our community has invested more than \$69 million for enhancement of education. The Foundation annually raises over \$5 million and fulfills its mission via programs such as College, Career & Technical Scholarships, Teaching Tools for Hillsborough Schools, Take Stock in Children Mentoring, School Enrichment, and Excellence in Education programs as well as other resource programs to benefit those we serve.