

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Kinsella Teacher to Receive National Award

WHAT: 2009 MetLife Foundation Ambassadors in Education Award

WHO: Christine Tocionis, language arts teacher at the R.J. Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts.

WHEN: Wednesday, June 3, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.

WHERE: The Learning Corridor, 359 Washington Street, Hartford.

SUMMARY: Christine Tocionis will be one of 25 educators nationwide to receive the 2009 MetLife Foundation Ambassadors in Education award for building community partnerships.

Specifically, Ms. Tocionis is being recognized for encouraging her students to take an active role in community improvement efforts with a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability. Her students have maintained a community garden at a nearby church, planted flowers and trees at a community center, collected donations for the Hartford Animal Shelter, sponsored a toy drive at a children's shelter and organized neighborhood clean-ups.

Ms. Tocionis and her students meet on a bimonthly basis to discuss environmental issues, attend lectures from guest speakers and participate in activities such as building bird feeders and planters for convalescent homes. She also helps students understand the concept of community in a larger way, as when she chaperoned students attending a United Nations sponsored youth conference on the environment in Malaysia.

The Ambassadors in Education Program, a partnership between the National Civic League and MetLife Foundation, recognizes educators from 25 participating public school districts for building partnerships with community organizations, parents, and guardians; resolving conflicts; promoting safety at their schools; and participating in civic engagement and community service efforts.

Each award winner earns a crystal apple and a \$5,000 grant for his or her school presented by representatives of MetLife and the civic league. The program has so far recognized 140 Ambassadors In Education with \$700,000 in grants. For more information about the MetLife Foundation Ambassadors in Education Award visit www.ncl.org/metlife.

MetLife Foundation, established in 1976, supports education, health, civic and cultural programs throughout the United States. In education, it places particular emphasis on initiatives that improve public schools, develop the leadership of teachers and principals, and involve parents and communities.

The National Civic League, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization devoted to community building and strengthening local democracy, administers the award program.

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