

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Teachers of Distinction Notified in Surprise Classroom Presentations**

(November 30, 2011 – Naples, FL) The Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Program’s 2011-12 Teachers of Distinction were announced today in surprise classroom visits to their schools. These teachers received surprise congratulations from volunteers at The Education Foundation along with a \$200 cash prize provided by the Mary Ingram Fund of the Columbus Foundation.

These teachers will continue in the Golden Apple Selection process which will involve more classroom observations and interviews by the community-based selection committee, and from this group, six (6) teachers will be selected to receive a Golden Apple.

The Golden Apple teachers along with the Teachers of Distinction will be honored at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Celebration presented by Suncoast for Kids Foundation on April 11, 2012, hosted by the Naples Grande. The celebration will feature video vignettes that will tell an in-depth story of the impact that these Golden Apple teachers have on their students. Students, families, educators and the community will watch this premiere together during the celebration.

Media partners WINK-TV and Naples Daily News have supported this teacher recognition program since its inception and thanks to their support, The Education Foundation will be able to share this story of the impact of teachers and delve more deeply into how great teachers make the difference for students.

“As we change the format of the program from a live awards celebration, to a video story that engages more students and families about the impact of teachers, it made sense that we make some shifts to utilize the generosity of our community partners in ways that make the best use of resources,” explained Susan McManus, President of The Education Foundation. “We are so grateful for the support of the Philharmonic Center for the Arts and the wonderful live Golden Apple awards ceremonies we have had there, and look forward to working together to create new opportunities for students and teachers.”

Kathleen van Bergen, CEO and President of the Philharmonic Center for the Arts, says the Phil will continue its longstanding partnership with the education community of Southwest Florida. “Education is an essential component of who we are and we anticipate creating new and stimulating opportunities for teachers and students in the coming months. We salute the efforts of the Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Program and particularly look forward to working with The Education Foundation on an event in the fall of 2012.”

The Golden Apple teachers, Golden Apple Teachers of Distinction, and Collier County Public Schools’ Teachers of the Year will be honored at the celebration on April 11<sup>th</sup>. Suncoast for Kids Foundation, presenting sponsor, is funded entirely by the Suncoast Schools Federal Credit Union, and 100 percent of funds are contributed to organizations and initiatives that assist children in the communities Suncoast Schools FCU serves. “Suncoast for Kids has supported educators who foster success in their students, and it’s important we recognize their commitment as a community through programs such as Golden Apple,”

says Greg Pasanen, Suncoast Schools FCU Regional Vice President. “There is no greater commitment than one that helps our youth’s success come to fruition.”

On December 13<sup>th</sup>, Stock Development will host a private reception at the Club at Olde Cypress to meet and welcome the new Teachers of Distinction. They will also be recognized at the McDonald’s Breakfast in March and receive gifts from the community throughout this process.

#### **ABOUT THE EDUCATION FOUNDATION OF COLLIER COUNTY**

*Founded in 1990, The Education Foundation of Collier County is an independent, not-for-profit 501(c) (3) organization that eliminates barriers and creates opportunities for students, families, educators, and the community to work together so that every student may succeed.*

*Get on the bus for Collier students: Learn - Volunteer - Give. The Education Foundation of Collier County has earned the highest 4-star rating for sound fiscal management for three consecutive years from Charity Navigator. Visit [www.GetOnTheBusCollier.org](http://www.GetOnTheBusCollier.org).*

#### **ABOUT SUNCOAST SCHOOLS FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**

*Suncoast Schools FCU, chartered in 1934 as Hillsborough County Teachers Credit Union, operates 50 full-service branches and serves more than 500,000 members in the following Florida counties: Charlotte, Citrus, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Hillsborough, Lee, Levy, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Sumter. With assets of approximately \$5 billion, Suncoast Schools FCU is the largest credit union in the state of Florida and the 8th largest in the United States. For more information visit: [www.suncoastfcu.org](http://www.suncoastfcu.org).*