

**Press Release for Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin Counties
Pioneer Valley Excellence in Teaching Awards Program
2009**

The Pioneer Valley will once again honor outstanding teachers in thirty-eight school communities in the Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire Counties. One hundred forty-four teachers will be honored for their professionalism and their excellence in teaching practices, his/her own professional development, demonstration of collaboration and cooperation, reaching above and beyond the required teaching job, and other outstanding qualities.

This is the seventh year for this outstanding program honoring teachers. Almost 900 teachers will have been honored over the seven year period of time from the three counties.

Sponsors in Hampden County include: The Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation, the Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation, MassMutual Financial Group, Myers Bros & Kalicka, P.C., Pride Stores & Stations, The Reminder, Southworth Paper Company, The Springfield Republican, STCU Credit Union, Westfield State College Foundation, WGBY Channel 57, Channels 40 & 22, Big Y, The Log Cabin Banquet & Meeting House, and the local YMCAs.

The first Celebration of teachers in Hampden County will take place on Tuesday, April 28th, 2009 at the Log Cabin in Holyoke. At this celebration teachers in the communities of East Longmeadow, Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District, Ludlow, Martin Luther King Charter School, Monson, New Leadership Charter School, Palmer, Pathfinder Regional High School, Robert Hughes Charter School, and Springfield will be honored.

The second Celebration of teachers will take place on Thursday, May 7th, 2009 at the Log Cabin in Holyoke. At this celebration teachers will be honored in the communities of Agawam, Chicopee, Holyoke, The Holyoke Charter School, The MacDuffie School, Northampton, The Pioneer Valley Christian School, Sabis International Charter School, Southwick, Westfield, West Springfield, & Willie Ross School for the Deaf.

The third Celebration will be held on Thursday, May 14th, 2009 at the Log Cabin for Hampshire and Franklin Counties. Teachers will be honored from the school districts of Amherst-Pelham Public and Regional School Districts, Belchertown, The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Springfield, Easthampton, Frontier Regional-Union #38, Gateway Regional, Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, The Hampshire Regional Schools, Hatfield, The Jewish Schools of Western MA, the Orange Public Schools, Smith Vocational & Agricultural High School, South Hadley, and Ware Public Schools.

The sponsors for the Hampshire and Franklin Counties include: Big Y Foods, The Channing Bete Company, Country Bank, The Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation, Log Cabin Banquet and Meeting House, Meyers Bros & Kalicka, Southworth Paper Company, the Republican, the Daily Hampshire Gazette, STCU Credit Union, Westfield State College Foundation, the Workers Credit Union of Athol, Wright Builders of Northampton, and the YMCAs of the local communities.

The public is invited to attend these events. Tickets to the event may be purchased from the school communities listed.

Each honored teacher will receive two tickets to the Celebration at the Log Cabin & Meeting House in Holyoke, a check for \$600, an engraved plaque, a membership to a local YMCA for three months, a gift certificate from Westfield State College to be used for graduate or under graduate work or a workshop at the CENTER, an invitation from WGBY to take an online course with credit from Westfield State College, a letter of commendation from the Governor, and other gifts.

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