

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Patrick Gasper, DPI Communications Officer, (608) 266-3559

## Evers to recognize 10 individuals and organizations as Friends of Education

MADISON — State Superintendent Tony Evers will present his 2010 Friends of Education awards Thursday in Madison as part of his second annual State of Education address. The seven individuals and three organizations that will receive awards make significant contributions to students in local communities and across the state.

In choosing his 2010 Friends of Education recipients, Evers said he is “humbled by the dedication of these citizens and organizations who each day work to improve the lives and education of the children of Wisconsin.”

Evers will present awards to:

**Jessica Doyle** of Madison, who throughout her life, and most recently as Wisconsin’s First Lady, has lived her deep commitment to education and improving the lives of others. The former Peace Corps volunteer has taught elementary, middle, and high school students in Wisconsin and around the globe. As First Lady, she has been one of the state’s foremost ambassadors for educational excellence, literacy, and state pride and culture through her “Where in Wisconsin is Jessica Doyle,” and “Read on Wisconsin,” programs. She also leads the “Community Connections” initiative, a call for volunteers to serve as mentors to middle school students.

**Darrell Finch** of Milwaukee, an education specialist for the Housing Authority of the city of Milwaukee, for his work with students and families in the Highland Homes and Scattered Sites housing developments. In the past five years, his students boast 100 percent enrollment and no dropouts. The children each have an educational achievement plan that is developed with their parents. And with Finch’s encouragement, many parents continue their own education.

**Ken Hall**, director of the Fond du Lac Public Library, for his efforts to address the information needs of displaced workers in the greater Fond du Lac area. Through the services of two VISTA volunteers, who recruited community members to staff the Opportunity Center at the library, more than 650 job-seekers had help to improve their computer skills, write resumes and cover letters, search online for work, and research jobs and companies. Hall extended the services of the Opportunity Center to other smaller libraries in Fond du Lac County, making the library a center for economic development and recovery.

**Craig and Cathy Miles** of Luck, for starting a foundation to support young people as a continuation of their son Mark’s legacy of caring and compassion. The “Whatever Individual Needs Gear or Support” (WINGS) Foundation, serving the school districts and communities of northwest Wisconsin, has provided clothing, shoes, dental care, books, athletic and school supplies, and any other gear a student requires to meet immediate needs so that finances do not limit student dreams. The work of the WINGS Foundation is funded primarily by an annual golf benefit held in Luck and through other donations.

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**Jim Morgan**, a vice president at Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, headquartered in Madison, for his dedication to advancing education in Wisconsin. He served on the State Superintendent's Business Education Advisory Council and co-chaired both the State Superintendent's Task Force on Personal Financial Literacy for Model Academic Standards and the Wisconsin Entrepreneurship Education Task Force. Additionally, he was instrumental in the operation of Business World, a summer program for students and teachers, and the launch of the Wisconsin Institute on Financial and Economic Education. Morgan also coaches youth volleyball, soccer, baseball, and basketball.

**UMOS**, a private, nonprofit corporation established in 1965 and headquartered in Milwaukee, for its advocacy and services to migrant and seasonal farm workers throughout Wisconsin. The organization has played a significant role in the lives of thousands of migrant children and families by operating Head Start and Day Care centers throughout the state. UMOS also offers educational programming for adults, including Basic Skills Education classes, GED/HSED preparation, and English as a Second Language. Through the leadership of **Lupe Martinez**, president and chief executive officer, UMOS partners with community-based organizations and educational institutions to meet the learning needs of the communities they serve. Martinez will accept the award.

**Bao Vang** of Wausau, producer and anchor of the News Channel 7 Morning Show in Wausau, for her work to provide educational or teachable moments to develop understanding of Hmong culture. Vang is active in the Marathon County Hmong History month, which is celebrated in April; participates on the annual career day; and arranges activities at the TV station for students. Additionally, Vang is an active member of the HOPE Hmong women organization that raises money to provide college scholarships to local students.

**WEA Trust**, headquartered in Madison, for being a strong partner in many health and wellness efforts, including the Governor's School Health Award and Movin and Munchin Schools. The trust has contributed over \$40,000 to participating schools and sponsored two Olympians, Suzy Favor Hamilton and Casey Fitzrandolph, who do kick-off events for the program. WEA Trust also has led efforts to address bullying by making sure teachers across the state have a copy of the Department of Public Instruction's bullying prevention curricula. **Mark Moody** will accept the award on behalf of WEA Trust.

**Wisconsin PTA**, which is celebrating 100 years of advocacy for children and youth. Historically, the PTA has advanced issues such as child labor laws, literacy, automobile safety, kindergarten, hot lunch programs, fair wages for teachers, and juvenile justice. The organization plays a critical role in schools throughout the state, with its volunteer members often dedicating their vacation time, weekends, and own resources to work on behalf of children. The Wisconsin PTA speaks out for family engagement, knowing that parents are the first and most influential teachers and that parental involvement is an important factor in children's academic success. PTA President **Roxanne Starks** of Milwaukee will accept the award.

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**NOTE:** This news release is available electronically at [http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2010\\_117.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2010_117.pdf). Following the program, photos of those accepting awards will be available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sprntdnt/photos.html>. The awards program is expected to be viewable via the WisconsinEye website at <http://www.wiseye.org/>.