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SIX SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL COUNSELORS RECOGNIZED FOR PROMOTING HIGHER EDUCATION

Educators, Administrators Celebrate Counseling Best Practices

COLUMBIA, S.C. (May 19, 2010) — During a special banquet last night at the Columbia Museum of Art, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) and the South Carolina Department of Education partnered in presenting the 2010 S.C. Higher Education Awareness Readiness Transition (HEART) Award.

In its second year, the S.C. HEART Award recognizes excellence in school counseling and success promoting higher education awareness in elementary, middle and high schools throughout the state.

“Our school counselors are a vital link in helping students reach their educational and career goals,” said Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, CHE Director of Student Services and the banquet’s opening speaker. “Promoting higher education is only one of our school counselors’ many responsibilities, which is why it’s so important to recognize and reward those who make it a priority.”

Of 60 nominees, three recipients and three finalists were chosen by a specially-appointed selection committee. Each S.C. HEART Award recipient received a \$3,500 award and a \$1,500 incentive grant for his or her current school’s counseling department. Each finalist received a \$1,000 incentive grant for his or her school.

The 2010 SC HEART Award Recipients:

Zan T. Pender – 2010 S.C. HEART Award Elementary School Recipient
Lemira Elementary School in Sumter, S.C.

A school counselor for the past eight years, Pender was the first in his family to graduate from college — who understands firsthand the importance of helping young students understand what it takes to achieve career goals.

As part of his school counseling program, Pender makes college preparation a key focus. With college pennants displayed throughout the hallways and a televised morning show featuring a different college or university each week, he is creating a college-going culture. Just ask his students “Who are you?” and you’ll see the proof with their response: “We are Lemira students, and we *ARE* college bound.”

Crystal L. Halley – 2010 S.C. HEART Award Middle School Recipient
Alston Middle School in Summerville, S.C.

A school counselor for four years, Halley put herself through college to pursue her dream of becoming a school counselor.

Constantly looking for avenues to incorporate career awareness and college preparation for her students, Halley personally ensures her students are informed of the opportunities and necessary steps it takes to go to college. By creating the Alston Leadership Program for Students (ALPS), she offers her students the tools needed to be successful in life.

Susan B. Hilton – 2010 S.C. HEART Award High School Recipient
York Comprehensive High School in York, S.C.

A school counselor for 31 years with more than 35 years of experience in public education, Hilton believes that a school counselor can be the key to helping each child be successful — which is her goal every day for every child.

Starting early, Hilton makes sure students understand the needed steps toward higher education. She says it's rewarding to see her students' eyes light up when she helps them search for a college and apply for scholarships. Her favorite part? When students realize that they can go to college.

“We commend all of our recipients and finalists for their commitment to creating a college-going culture in South Carolina,” said Woodfaulk. “So many students and their families look to school counselors as the primary source for higher education information and guidance, and with counselors like those we’ve recognized tonight, more and more students will succeed in making college a reality.”

In addition to the award recipients, the 2010 S.C. HEART Award finalists include **Dana Partin** from Larne Elementary School in Clover, S.C.; **Carolyn B. Aarons** from Daniel Island School in Charleston, S.C.; and **Linda J. Strojan** from Aiken High School in Aiken, S.C.

The S.C. HEART Award is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Education and the College Access Challenge Grant.

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