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**THE CATHOLIC FOUNDATION SURPRISES DALLAS-AREA TEACHERS, STAFF
WITH END OF YEAR 'THANK YOU'**

Three Grand Award winners kick-off summer with \$5,000 each; additional 20 winners receive \$500

DALLAS – The Catholic Foundation awarded its last round of “Work of Heart” Awards for the 2007-2008 school year, surprising 23 teachers, faculty and staff members in local Catholic schools with a special end of the year ‘thank you’. The awards, a grant of either \$5,000 or \$500 to spend as they wish, arrived just in time for summer vacation.

The Work of Heart Awards were established and solely funded by an anonymous Dallas family through The Catholic Foundation to honor educators and staff of Catholic lower, middle and high schools located in the Diocese of Dallas. The Work of Heart Awards fund is now open to donations from anyone wanting to honor these educators and staff. The family has offered to match individual donations to The Catholic Foundation for the Work of Heart Awards fund up to an undetermined amount, in an effort to permanently endow the program.

“The Work of Heart Awards fund makes available a unique opportunity for our community to support our local Catholic schools and their dedication to bettering the lives of our children,” said Edwin M. Schaffler, Foundation president and CEO. “The lasting positive impact that these educators impart on our youth is invaluable and by following in the anonymous family’s footsteps, we as a community can ensure that their hard work does not go unrecognized.”

Since 2005, the Catholic Foundation has presented 470 grants totaling \$434,000 to individuals who serve children in 37 area schools. Recipients of the Work of Heart Awards were selected from written nominations submitted to The Catholic Foundation by students, teachers, parents, administrators and community members.

Three teachers were distinguished as Grand Award winners in the Work of Heart program and were presented with \$5,000 for their personal use.

Robert J. Haaser, sixth grade form master, social studies and history teacher, and director of admissions at Cistercian Preparatory School, is a recipient of a Grand Award having just completed his 39th year at Cistercian. Haaser is deemed a living legend that truly embodies the school's motto and mission: "ardere et lucere", to be enkindled and to shine. As form master for the current 6th grade class, Haaser has the unique role of leading these young men throughout the next eight years. Nominated by parents of student under his leadership, he is described as having an influence that, "quakes through his students, years – even decades – after they have graduated. He inspires and influences not only his students and former students, but his students' families as well."

Diana Pham, a kindergarten teacher at St. Pius X Catholic School, receives her Grand Award as a 'thank you' for taking on and embracing an unexpected challenge she was given earlier this year. In January, a fourth grade teacher at St. Pius X was forced on medical leave for six weeks after breaking her hip, leaving a void to be filled in the classroom. When Pham was asked to leave kindergarten and move up to teach fourth grade, she immediately stepped up to the task - taking on new students, a new curriculum and a heavier work load without once complaining. Pham was nominated by a member of the St. Pius community who feels, "very grateful and blessed to have such a caring, dedicated teacher as her on our staff."

Sandra Theiss, a vocational teacher at Notre Dame of Dallas School, was chosen to receive a Grand Award from the outstanding number of nomination letters sent by student's families, friends and peers on her behalf. Described as having "just the right mix of kindness, firmness and love for our children and families," Theiss is dedicated to ensuring every student's individual and unique needs are being met, both inside and outside the classroom. One parent of a student feels that "everyday she works with our child is a blessing," while another says that Theiss "truly lives every day doing incredible Work from *Her* Heart."

The following recipients each received a \$500 Work of Heart Award in recognition of their exceptional service.

All Saints Catholic School

- Shana Druffner, Orchestra Teacher

Bishop Lynch High School

- Randy Becker, Assistant Academic Dean

The Highlands School

- Michelle Reiff, Principal
- Karen Ward, Music Teacher

Holy Family of Nazareth School

- Mary Lou Parchman, Science and Art Teacher

Holy Trinity Catholic School

- Gail Macalik, Middle School English, Reading and Speech

Mount St. Michael Catholic School

- Suzanne Taitte, Music Teacher

Our Lady of Perpetual Help School

- Chianne Thomas, PE Teacher and Girls Basketball Coach

St. John Catholic School (Ennis)

- Nylene Daigle, Math Teacher

St. Joseph Catholic School (Richardson)

- Linda Leach, Kindergarten Teacher

St. Joseph Catholic School (Waxahachie)

- Mindy Taylor, Third Grade Teacher

St. Mark Catholic School

- Tammy Williams, Art Teacher

St. Patrick Catholic School

- Sister Bernarda Bludau, Principal

St. Paul the Apostle (Richardson)

- Karen Pirzadeh, Kindergarten Teacher

St. Phillip the Apostle Catholic School

- Ginna Curts, Administrative Assistant
- Rita Malik, Seventh and Eighth Grade Teacher

St. Monica Catholic School

- Madeline Florkowski, First Grade Teacher

St. Rita Catholic School

- Kerry Franklin, Kindergarten Teacher

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School

- Peggi Gray, Drama and Music Teacher
- Ray Waldvogel, Office Assistant

To nominate a candidate for the “Work of Heart” Award, please contact the Foundation’s Web site at **www.catholicfoundation.com** for instructions on the nomination process. Anyone serving as a full- or part-time employee in a Catholic school located in the Diocese of Dallas may be nominated. In addition to the \$500 awards, The Catholic Foundation will present up to eight Grand Awards of \$5,000 each during the school year.

Chartered in 1955, The Catholic Foundation was founded by a group of dedicated Catholic laymen with a vision that extended far beyond the charitable needs of the moment. For over 50 years, this independent, nonprofit corporation has dedicated its resources to compassionate charitable giving through grants provided by benefactors through its many planned giving programs. The Foundation has been able to provide approximately \$21 million through hundreds of grants to various religious, educational and charitable organizations within the Diocese of Dallas during its 50 plus years of existence. In addition, donor-advised funds maintained at the Foundation have accounted for many more grants amounting to millions of dollars over the years. **For additional information about The Catholic Foundation, call 972.661.9792.**

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