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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Educators Surprised in Classroom by Business and Community Leaders** Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Program™ Announces 33 Finalists

FORT MYERS, Fla. (Jan. 11, 2012) – 33 teachers from The School District of Lee County (list attached) were surprised in their classrooms today as the Foundation for Lee County Public Schools announced the Golden Apple Finalists for 2012. The Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Program brings awareness to the teaching profession in Lee County by recognizing top teachers in the district. Business and community leaders, school administrators, the Golden Apple Selection Committee and The Foundation for Lee County Public Schools' staff gathered together and visited the school of each Finalist to make the announcements.

"It is an honor for our school to have a Golden Apple finalist. Our finalist is a wonderful example of teachers who set and meet high expectations for themselves and their students," said Virginia Moore, principal of Allen Park Elementary.

Over 2,200 nominations were submitted by students, parents and the community. Every nominated teacher was given the opportunity to apply for the Golden Apple Award. The Golden Apple Selection Committee, made up of 12 Lee County business and community leaders, selected the finalists from a group of more than 300 applicants. The group ranked each application, narrowing the field to 67 Teachers of Distinction and 33 Finalists. In the coming months, the finalists will be observed in their classrooms and interviewed by the Selection Committee as part of the ongoing selection process. The Selection Committee looks for characteristics of outstanding teachers including control of their work environment, outstanding performance in the classroom, demonstration of imagination, commitment, communication skills and personal concern for the needs of students.

This year's six Golden Apple recipients will be announced in March with a surprise presentation in their classroom. They will be honored at the 2012 Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Banquet on Friday, April 13 at Harborside Event Center. The program will be broadcast live on local television channel 99 from 8:00 to 9:00 pm with no commercial breaks and rebroadcast the following week on WINK-TV. In addition to recognition at the dinner, each recipient will receive a \$3,000 cash award, the prestigious "golden apple", a golden apple lapel pin, and membership into the Academy of Teachers. The schools of the six Golden Apple teachers will each receive a \$500 grant to enrich and enhance curriculum.

All 33 finalists are invited to the televised Golden Apple Dinner and will be recognized on stage. They will be presented with a \$300 Classroom Grant to create unique hands on projects to enhance student learning. The next level -- 67 Teachers of Distinction -- will also be invited to

the Dinner. Teachers of Distinction ranked high in the application process and will continue to be recognized through upcoming Golden Apple activities. These top 100 educators have the opportunity to attend a professional development teacher training, Collegium for the Advancement of Education, which focuses on best practices and student achievement.

**About The Foundation:** The Foundation for Lee County Public Schools, Inc. is a private, 501(c) 3 organization established in 1986. Its mission is to enhance and enrich the quality of public education in Lee County for students and educators through programs, resources and experiences made possible through corporate, individual and educational partnerships. The Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Program™ was the first major project founded and developed by The Foundation for Lee County Public Schools, Inc. Since its inception, 134 teachers in the School District of Lee County have received the Golden Apple award. **Major Sponsors of the 2011-2012 Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Program are: Century Link, Chico's FAS, Inc., Lee Memorial Health System, The News-Press Media Group, Wells Fargo, and WINK – TV.**

### List of Finalists and their schools

L NAME	F NAME	SCHOOL
Sadler	Helen	Lehigh Senior High
Lansberry	Billy	North Fort Myers High
Miller	Alicia	Cape Coral High
O'Connor	Robert	Lexington Middle
Stovall	Janet	Tropic Isles Elementary
Hasty	Deanna	Ida S Baker High
Mayer	Amy	Allen Park Elementary
Smith	Kimberly	N Fort Myers Acad for the Arts
Conant	Alison	Pelican Elementary
Jeter	Samantha	Diplomat Middle
Jeter	Richard	Diplomat Middle
Knight	Tonya	Mirror Lakes Elementary
Mendes	Rebecca	Gateway Elementary
Verrone	Phyllis	Skyline Elementary
Amos	Angela	Cypress Lake Middle
Millican	Heather	Cypress Lake Middle
Poland	Donna	Sunshine Elementary
Riemenschneider	Eric	Fort Myers High
Corrigan	Mary	Mariner Middle
Graziani	Mary Beth	Spring Creek Elementary
Hassett	Susan	Robinson Littleton Elementary
King	Jennifer	Gulf Elementary
Lafferty	Natalie	Lehigh Senior High
Lillard	Louis	Riverdale High
Metz	Laurie	Dunbar High
Ferry	Annmarie	Estero High
Hanrahan	Patrick	Ida S Baker High
Kohlhauff	Sara	Pinewoods Elementary
Koller	Matthew	Fort Myers High

McNeeley     Angela  
Pelletier     Joni  
Reed         Laura  
Webb         Cynthia

Island Coast High  
Treeline Elementary  
Robinson Littleton Elementary  
Dunbar High

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If you would like more information about this program or to schedule an interview with Marshall T. Bower, Esq. please call Janelle Beaber at 239-337-0433 or email Janelle at [Janelle@leeschoolfoundation.org](mailto:Janelle@leeschoolfoundation.org).