



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Southside Family Charter School Teacher Named Recipient of Award for Academic Excellence

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***SOUTHSIDE FAMILY CHARTER SCHOOL TEACHER NAMED RECIPIENT OF AWARD
FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE***

Susan Oppenheim Honored for Contributions to Student Learning

October 1, 2006 (Minneapolis, MN)—Susan Oppenheim, Southside Family Charter School teacher, is one of two recipients of the WEM Foundation’s statewide Teacher Achievement Award. Oppenheim is recognized as an educator who supports and inspires students to achieve in spite of barriers to learning. The honor provides an unrestricted \$10,000 award, which Oppenheim has donated to Southside Family School’s 2008 Civil Rights History Trip.

Oppenheim, a lead teacher and founding member of Southside Family Charter School, joined the school 1972. She currently teaches general elementary, history, social studies, literature, and math for students in grades 1-8. She has developed a learning environment and curriculum that acknowledges the difficult realities of student’s lives, and helps them to imagine new realities for themselves and their communities. Oppenheim serves as an activist in the affairs of her community such as violence in neighborhoods, poverty, and environmental issues on reservations.

“Injustice and human suffering are the concerns of all good citizens, and I am proud to see my students learning that participation in the life of their communities brings a sense of pride and accomplishment,” says Oppenheim.

“Susie simply knows and believes in her students. She leads her classroom by example—she values and learns from her students, and as a result they do the same from her. Susie’s approach of encouraging leadership and teaching our shared history has produced academic excellence and tremendously engaged young learners,” says Lisa Thigpen, Southside Family Charter School teacher.

The WEM Educator Awards was created by Whitney and Elizabeth MacMillan and is administered by the Center for Academic Excellence. The MacMillans are passionate supporters of teachers and their role in helping all children achieve. According to the Center for Academic Excellence, “their awards program has helped recognize education’s often ‘unsung heroes’—educators who daily meet the challenges and opportunities of teaching in a variety of settings.”

The Southside Family Charter School is a small, k-8 school whose mission is to meet the needs of a culturally and ethnically diverse population by engaging children in critical thinking and problem solving, involving children in political and social activism, encouraging creative expression, offering a wide range of electives and advocating for children and families. Founded in 1972, the school pairs fundamental academics with an award-winning social justice curriculum. For more information please visit the school’s website at www.southsidefamilyschool.org.

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