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AAFCS 2007 National Teacher of the Year Kendra K. Naef, CFCS, works with Kimberly High School students Michael (freshman) and Khrysta (junior) on a housing project during her award-winning P.A.R.T.N.E.R.S. program. Photo taken by Kimberly High School student Steven Romenesko (senior).

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**Naef Named AAFCS National Teacher of the Year for
P.A.R.T.N.E.R.S. Program**

(Alexandria, Va. – May 7, 2007)—Kendra K. Naef, CFCS, of Kimberly High School, Kimberly, Wis., has been named American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) 2007 National Teacher of the Year (T.O.Y.). The announcement came today from AAFCS Transitional Executive Director Carolyn W. Jackson in commemoration of Teacher Appreciation Week (May 6-12). Naef will receive the prestigious AAFCS National Teacher of the Year award at the AAFCS 98th Annual Conference & Expo in Reno, Nevada, on June 21, 2007.

The AAFCS National T.O.Y. award, sponsored by AAFCS and co-sponsored by publisher Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, recognizes outstanding educational programs, methods, techniques, and activities that give visibility to family and consumer sciences (FCS) elementary and secondary education and support “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB). Each participating AAFCS affiliate

(more)

AAFCS National Teacher of the Year – page 2

selects its Teacher of the Year and the winning affiliate entries are submitted to AAFCS for the national competition. From this group, the Top T.O.Y.s are selected, with the most outstanding receiving the number one award. The National T.O.Y. is selected based upon the following criteria: integration of FCS with the core curriculum (NCLB) and other disciplines; exemplary level of professional commitment to FCS; goals and outcomes of the program; sustainability of the program; creativity, innovation, and cutting-edge techniques in the program; ability to sustain funding and overcome obstacles or challenges; positive influence on the lives of students; relevancy and timely impact on the students, school, and community; and increasing the visibility, recognition, and support of the FCS profession within the community.

“Being recognized as the 2007 AAFCS National Teacher of the Year is a great honor,” said Naef. “I feel privileged to work closely with students on a daily basis and to continue my learning alongside them. AAFCS has provided me with a strong understanding of the philosophical foundation on which the profession was founded, as well as opportunities for leadership, professional development, and networking with FCS colleagues. I look forward to advocating the importance of family and consumer sciences programs across the nation and supporting the need for high quality teachers in all classrooms.”

Through Naef’s unique and innovative P.A.R.T.N.E.R.S. program, special education students are teamed with regular education 11th and 12th graders to develop positive social and academic relationships. The program contributes to decreased stereotypes, positive peer attitudes, advocacy for individuals with special needs, and a more harmonious school culture.

Following an initial orientation, both special education and regular education groups are brought together for an introduction to the P.A.R.T.N.E.R.S. program and for teacher-led activities that incorporate cooperation, tolerance, patience, teamwork, and the identification of similarities. Then students from both groups are partnered together and interview each other to construct visual representations of themselves and discuss their interests. Throughout the remainder of the semester, pairs of regular education students develop, plan, and teach weeklong units.

Teaching plans include peer-developed accommodations and modifications for students with special learning needs. Within each unit, students incorporate guest speakers, field trips, and hands-on experiences. For example, in a unit about transportation, students may identify various forms of transportation, describe the uses and non-uses of various forms of transportation, obtain public

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transportation information (public bus schedule, cab phone number and rates), participate in a public bus trip in the community, and demonstrate appropriate social skills and behaviors in the community. At the conclusion of the unit, the peer teachers evaluate themselves and assess whether or not students in the program reached the stated unit objectives.

As part of the program, students also contribute to all aspects of the P.A.R.T.N.E.R.S. Sundae Shoppe in-school business, designed to promote career and technical skills and knowledge to special populations. The Sundae Shoppe has not only led to financial self-sufficiency of the P.A.R.T.N.E.R.S. program, but has also created an avenue to expand the program's goals outside of the classroom into the larger school population. The students operate the Sundae Shoppe each Wednesday during the last portion of the class and into student extended learning time. This business provides a prime opportunity for the entire school population to observe students with and without disabilities working together successfully.

Since its inception in 1999, 261 students have participated in the P.A.R.T.N.E.R.S. program. Although it is offered each semester, the number of regular education students who apply far exceeds the number of available enrollment slots. Regular education students are now selected for participation in the program based on written statements and personal recommendations. Many regular education students in the program become strong advocates for their peers with special needs and go on to pursue degrees relating to their P.A.R.T.N.E.R.S. program experiences, including education, special education, social work, psychology, speech and language pathology, occupational therapy, and health services.

“Ms. Naef has truly been an inspiration to me as I pursue a major in communicative disorders at UW-Stevens Point,” said former P.A.R.T.N.E.R.S. student Courtney Fuller. “Academically Ms. Naef has taught me a great deal, but in addition to that, she has taught me the ability to accept others who are different from myself, to focus on the person and not the disability that one may have.”

A 10-year member of AAFCS, Ms. Naef has been teaching family and consumer sciences classes full-time at Kimberly High School since 2000. In 2003, she took on the additional responsibility of family and consumer sciences content area facilitator for the Kimberly Area School District. In addition to the AAFCS National T.O.Y. award, Ms. Naef has been honored for her outstanding professional achievements with the AAFCS New Achievers award in 2004 and the

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Milken Family Foundation National Educator award in 2005. She is an active member of many education-related organizations, including the National Education Association and Family and Consumer Sciences Education Association, and is pursuing a Ph.D. in family and consumer sciences education from Iowa State University.

Founded in 1909, AAFCS is the only not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to bringing people together to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities. AAFCS' 8,000 members are elementary, secondary, and post-secondary educators, researchers, and administrators; Cooperative Extension educators; and other professionals in business and industry, not-for-profit organizations, and government. These professionals develop, integrate, and provide life skills and research in the areas of personal finance; child care and parenting; conflict resolution; consumer education; housing and environment; apparel and textiles; and healthy eating and nutrition. With national headquarters based in Alexandria, Va., AAFCS has 52 affiliates located across the United States and Puerto Rico.

Interviews/Quotes

For more information or to schedule an interview, contact Gwynn Mason at 703-706-4600 or gmason@aafcs.org.

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