

Marian Greenblatt Education Fund, Inc

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Four Teachers Win Excellence Awards from Greenblatt Education Fund

Four Montgomery County, MD, teachers have won the “2010 Awards for Excellence in Teaching” from the Marian Greenblatt Education Fund in the 22nd annual presentation of the awards. Each of the three veteran teachers received \$1,000 and a first-year teacher won \$500. In addition, one of the teachers, James Schafer, was named County Teacher of the Year by the Montgomery County Business Roundtable for Education in a ceremony in Gaithersburg on April 28, 2010.

James Schafer, of Rockville, a physics and mathematics teacher at Montgomery Blair High School, was chosen by the Greenblatt Fund for excellent teaching of physics. His student teams from Blair High School have won numerous contests on *It's Academic*, the televised quiz-show competition between local high school teams. One of his students won the Gold Medal at the International Physics Olympics held in Vietnam. In addition, Schafer has increased the number of students taking physics, thereby helping to close the achievement gap. Active in mentoring younger teachers, he has developed materials for physics teachers county-wide.

Carol Knoblach, of North Potomac, a fourth-grade teacher at Travilah Elementary School, was recognized for helping her students achieve high levels in the Maryland School Assessment, guiding students to build a pond at the school, organizing the student government association and winning five grants to enrich the learning experience. In addition, she and her husband have raised three children and been foster parents for 11.

Donald Ayotte, of Woodsboro, teaches Advanced Placement chemistry at Wootton High School. He has dramatically increased the number of students taking AP chemistry exams. During his tenure at Wootton, the average AP grade rose to 4.8, the best record in the county. The solubility song he teaches is famous to generations of students at Wootton and Damascus High. For 15 years, he was the primary science teacher on the school system's cable TV program. He also has sponsored the Chemathon contest and the Chemistry Club for years.

Amber Dinisio, Ellicott City, of Arcola Elementary School in Kemp Mill, was chosen as the winner of the “Excellence in First-Year Teaching Award.” While many of her kindergarten students started the school year not speaking English, under her instruction they achieved very high scores on the standard assessment tests.

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Description of the Marian Greenblatt Education Fund

The Marian Greenblatt Education Fund was founded in 1988 to commemorate the life of the late Dr. Marian Greenblatt, elected two-term member (1976-1984) of the County Board of Education and President 1978-79. She died of cancer in 1988 at age 46. The Fund is dedicated to recognizing excellence in education, through **four** major efforts in Montgomery County, MD.

- The **first** mission of the Fund is to give three annual awards of \$1,000 each to excellent long-term teachers in the county. The winners are chosen for their ability to inspire their students to perform at the top of their level and to encourage younger teachers to be the best they can be. A committee of educators, business people, and Greenblatt family members chooses teachers nominated by principals, PTAs, and other teachers. Since 1989, 56 long-term teachers have been honored.
- The **second** effort recognizes a first-year teacher who is clearly on the way to being a master teacher. This program was started in 1997, when the first Marian Greenblatt Education Fund's first-year winner went on to win the Sallie Mae Foundation Award as the Best First-Year Teacher of the Year in Maryland.
- The **third** effort, begun in 1998, gives \$100 awards to a junior at each public high school in the county who has demonstrated excellence in Social Studies. More than \$32,000 has been awarded in this part of the Greenblatt program.
- The **fourth** effort is a program that awards \$1,000 scholarships to each of two students at Watkins Mill High School for excellence in Foreign Languages, in conjunction with the Jones Family and the Plasma Fellows.

The Fund continues the efforts of the late Dr. Greenblatt to improve education in Montgomery County. An educator all her professional life, she had taught high-school social studies in Staten Island, NY; history and teaching techniques at Hampton Institute, a historically-black college in VA; and history at the University of Maryland. She was elected and served on the Montgomery County Board of Education 1976-84, and as its President 1978-9. She worked to set higher academic standards for students, eliminate frivolous courses, decrease class sizes, reduce administrative costs, give extra grade-point weighting for Advanced Placement classes, end social promotion, and eliminate hooky. She was the Director of President Reagan's Presidential Academic Fitness Award Program 1984-88.

The fund is managed by Dr. Marshal Greenblatt and his sons. Contributions to the Fund are tax-deductible, as the IRS has designated it a 501c(3) organization.