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## W-JCC SCHOOL DIVISION ANNOUNCES 2010 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

**Williamsburg, May 20** – Three teachers who have consistently demonstrated creativity, rapport with students and colleagues, and extraordinary community service have been named as the W-JCC School Division’s Teachers of the Year for 2010, and were honored this evening at a ceremony and reception hosted at SunTrust Bank in New Town by the Williamsburg-James City County Education Foundation (WJCEF).

The Teacher of the Year for Elementary Schools is Matthew Whaley Elementary Visions Specialist **ANDREA ALLEY**.

The Teacher of the Year for Middle Schools is Toano Middle School mathematics instructor **MEGHAN LUNSFORD**.

The Teacher of the Year for High Schools is Jamestown High School mathematics instructor **KELLEY C. CLARK**.

“All of us have had teachers that, when we look back over our school years, inspired and encouraged us to be what we are today,” said WJCEF President Clifford Firstenberg. “It is with great pleasure that the Foundation recognizes the winners with this reception, and rewards them with our traditional ‘apple’ trophy and a cash prize of \$500, generously donated by donors and sponsors from our area.”

“We are recognizing those who, according to their peers, students and others in the community, have gone the extra mile in creativity, community service, caring, or a combination of all of these,” said WJCC Acting Superintendent Dr. Scott A.

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Burckbuchler. "They have consistently demonstrated effort and passion far above the norm – the kind that our students and their colleagues will remember for years to come because of their student empathy, guidance, and instructional expertise."

As a Visions specialist, **Andrea Alley** works with students who need to be challenged academically. Andrea's passion for the Visions program is reflected in the creative units she designs for her students. Her greatest strength is her understanding of the needs of the gifted learner, and how to bring out their talents and unique gifts.

Following are a few examples of the extraordinary lengths Andrea goes to when planning and preparing for enrichment activities:

- She planned and implemented "Pi Day" for fifth graders, which helped students' knowledge and understanding of abstract concepts.
- She created the "Explorers Unit" for third graders, in which they researched the role of pirates in world exploration, including a study of types of ships, trading routes, techniques, and pirate plundering.
- Under her guidance, fifth graders researched the historical significance of DNA, techniques for how to genetically alter plant genes, and some of controversies about this topic.

Her nominator reports that parent support for Andrea is unparalleled. "The energy and creativity that she brought to the Visions program is nothing short of extraordinary," wrote one parent. Another parent of a gifted daughter wrote that she "loves" her time with Mrs. Alley, and thanked her for developing the student's understanding of difficult concepts with her customary patience and gentle nurturing.

"Mrs. Alley never misses an opportunity to advocate for the gifted learner," her nominator states. "She is a tremendous asset to the Division and truly makes a difference at Matthew Whaley."

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Andrea has 27 years of teaching experience. She holds a masters degree in teaching—elementary education from the Colorado College in Colorado Springs, CO, and a bachelor’s degree in education—art education from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, CO.

**Meghan Lunsford’s** math classes at Toano Middle School, according to her nominator, are “moments of complete engagement: She makes the learning atmosphere exciting, youthful, fun and current. Her rapport with each individual child makes them feel that they are being heard, and it allows them to feel confident and safe when asking for help.”

Because of her engaging technique, Mrs. Lunsford was asked this year to accept the challenge of teaching the lowest level of mathematics to sixth grade students. Most of these children had been called “unmotivated,” “problematic,” or just “uninterested” in school. But in Mrs. Lunsford’s class, these same students are excited, and for the first time are seeing what they are capable of.

“Meghan’s enthusiasm for her subject is contagious, and anyone who steps into her classroom can see it in every single child there,” her nominator writes. “This is what truly makes a master teacher great.”

In addition to her in-class work, Mrs. Lunsford was chosen to participate in a William & Mary project to develop case studies of how exemplary technology-using teachers such as herself plan for and develop the integration of technology in their classrooms. Mrs. Lunsford’s final product is now being used in technology integration classes at William & Mary to help future teachers understand the importance of planning for technology use within their curricula.

“Kids never know what to expect when they walk into her room – and they love it,” the nominator states. “She understands better than most that not every child learns the same way.”

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Mrs. Lunsford holds master's and bachelor's degrees in elementary education and interdisciplinary studies from Old Dominion University, where she achieved the dean's list three times. She was named Teacher of the Year in 2001 at Poquoson Elementary School.

The multiple pages of parent notes to **Kelley Clark** best tell the story:

"Your enthusiasm and love for teaching this course enabled [my student] to grasp, understand and achieve his full potential."

"It is teachers like yourself, who truly know children – strengths, weaknesses, and as a person – that make the difference."

"You have been one of the best teachers we have come across in a long time. Your dedication is amazing."

"Over the last semester, Ms. Clark has provided [my student] a motivation in math that has produced profound results ... Ms. Clark is responsible for the 'ah-ha' moment."

Given these testimonials and many others like them, Ms. Clark's positive impact on her students is evident. But it doesn't stop there. Her nominator points out that she also is an "exceptional collaborator and instructional leader. She always is positive and productive and has earned the trust of each of her colleagues across the school. Her passion extends beyond the classroom as well: She initiated Jamestown High School's extremely successful "O-Crew" program, the school's orientation program for rising ninth graders that is run by 70 juniors and seniors organized by her.

As a final touch, she cements the relationship she has developed with her students and their families by writing 75 individual handwritten notes to her students at the end of the semester. She always remains after school to assist students and makes herself available from her home as well.

"She is one of the very few teachers who, quite literally, will stop at nothing to help her students achieve," her nominator wrote. "Kelley Clark exemplifies what WJCC schools can and should expect from master teachers."

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Ms. Clark has taught in WJCC schools for nine years, including stints at all three middle schools (James Blair, Toano and Berkeley). She holds master's and bachelor's degrees in education from the College of William & Mary and Grove City College (PA), respectively, and took additional math courses to complete her math endorsement from Christopher Newport University. When not in the classroom, she serves on the board of directors for DreamCatchers therapeutic riding center in Toano.

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