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CONTACT:
Tam Taylor, Center for Civic Education
(818) 591-9321, taylor@civiced.org

Phil Duncan, Center on Congress at Indiana University
(703) 237-1500, pduncan@civicatalyst.com

Teachers from California, Kentucky and Montana Receive American Civic Education Teacher Awards

WASHINGTON — Teachers from California, Kentucky and Montana are recipients of the 2008 American Civic Education Teacher Awards, recognizing their exemplary work preparing young people to become informed and engaged citizens.

Selected in a nationwide search, the ACETA winners are: Sally Broughton of Monforton Elementary School in Bozeman, Mont.; Cheryl Cook-Kallio of Irvington High School in Fremont, Calif.; and Julie Kuhnhein of Highlands High School in Fort Thomas, Ky.

The awards are given annually to elementary and secondary teachers of civics, government and related subjects who have demonstrated special expertise in motivating students to learn about the Constitution, Congress and public policy.

ACETA is sponsored by the Center for Civic Education, the Center on Congress at Indiana University and the National Education Association.

Charles N. Quigley, Executive Director of the Center for Civic Education, praised Broughton, Cook-Kallio and Kuhnhein for their commitment to teaching young people the responsibilities of citizenship in our democracy. “These teachers are extraordinarily dedicated to giving their students a firm grasp of the fundamental values and principles of our constitutional system of government,” Quigley said.

Lee Hamilton, Director of the Center on Congress, lauded the award-winning teachers for “helping young people feel they are a part of something larger than themselves by connecting them to the splendid traditions of American civic engagement. They show their students how to use their talents to make their communities and their nation better.”

In presenting the awards, Hamilton said, “We call public attention to the fact that many teachers across the nation are doing an excellent job molding the civic character of America’s youth.”

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The ACETA winners receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., in July to participate in an educational program that includes observing committee hearings in Congress, meeting members of Congress and other key officials, and visiting sites such as the National Archives and the U.S. Supreme Court.

The three awardees share a passion for explaining the work of government in an engaging way, and helping young people see that what goes on in Washington is relevant to their lives.

"My goal is to develop in my students the civic knowledge, dispositions, and virtues, and the intellectual and participatory skills, to become reasoned, informed citizens," said Sally Broughton, of Montana. "I guide them by active learning; I want my students to feel empowered and pushed to the limits of their ability."

California's Cheryl Cook-Kallio said, "Education is a prerequisite for democracy. So is civic virtue. Service learning and community service connect academics with real world learning opportunities. Civic education allows students to learn for the sake of learning."

And Kentucky's Julie Kuhnhein said, "Preparing our students to become productive and responsible members of society is the most important charge we have as educators. This task is best accomplished by many people. I want to thank my colleagues from across the Commonwealth for their assistance. I look forward to working with the organizations sponsoring ACETA as we bring more attention to the cause of civic education."

Each year the ACETA program selects and showcases three teachers whose students represent the diversity of the American public and private school systems. Applicants must be full-time classroom teachers of grades K–12. There is no fee to apply. Applications and materials for the 2009 awards will be available online in January.

To learn more about ACETA, visit the Web sites of the sponsoring organizations.

About the Center for Civic Education (www.civiced.org)

The Center for Civic Education is a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational organization dedicated to fostering the development of informed, responsible participation in civic life by citizens committed to values and principles fundamental to American constitutional democracy.

About the Center on Congress (www.centeroncongress.org)

The Center on Congress is a nonpartisan educational institution established in 1999 to help improve the public's understanding of Congress and to encourage civic engagement.

About the National Education Association (www.nea.org)

The NEA is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing 3.2 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators and students preparing to become teachers.