

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

FOURTH ANNUAL CHARTER UP! AWARDS CELEBRATES FRESH APPROACH TO EDUCATION

Illinois Network of Charter Schools Honors Five Schools for Innovative Programs

CHICAGO, IL – Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS) is hosting the fourth annual Charter Up! performance recognition ceremony on Tuesday, June 2 at Chicago’s Garfield Park Conservatory. The celebratory event will honor five charter public schools who have contributed to academic achievement by creating an active and original program or initiative. The 2009 Charter Up! honorees are **Namaste Charter School, Youth Connection Charter School, Civitas Schools, Chicago Math & Science Academy** and **Noble Network**.

The Charter Up! event provides Illinois’ charter public school community with an opportunity to commemorate innovation, passion and success. The event also brings statewide attention to charter public school’s autonomous and cutting edge approach to public education. The gathering will be hosted by Elizabeth Evans, INCS executive director, and will include guest speaker Jesse Ruiz, Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) chairman.

The judges responsible for selecting honorees are Cindy Fischer, Peoria Public Schools, Mac Pogue, Peoria Public Schools, Andrew Rice, Department of Family and Support Services, Mark Rodriguez, Changing Worlds, Marcella Simmons, After School Matters, Laurie Preece, Rockford Charter Schools, Brenan Smith, Mikva Challenge and John Ziegler, DePaul University.

Creating More Routes To High-Quality Education

INCS created Charter Up! to encourage forward thinking and academic excellence. Charter Up! provides charter schools with the opportunity to showcase programs that impact their students and communities and have the potential to be applied in traditional public schools. Each charter school had the opportunity to submit an overview of programs that have helped produce outstanding academic achievements. Participants were encouraged to submit programs/ initiatives that demonstrated creativity or innovation in leadership development, governance, parental involvement, curriculum, enrichment programming and funding. The independent judging panel reviewed the entries and chose the five honorees based on their creativity, innovation, impact on student achievement and representation of the overall charter school experience. Honored programs will be included in the “Roadmap to Innovation”, a portfolio of program models that are shared with teachers and school leaders at in-district schools as well as within the charter school network.

Charter schools have become a national topic of conversation due to the advocacy of President Barack Obama. They are revitalizing public education choice and typically outperform traditional public schools. This is possible by following the charter school vision of individual student attention, higher standards for the school administration, teachers and students as well as engaging learning environments

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The Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS) is dedicated to improving the quality of public education by promoting and invigorating the charter school concept. The voice of the state’s charter schools, INCS advocates for legislation to strengthen charter schools, educates the public about the value of charter schools, and supports the dissemination of best practices throughout the system.