



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## FIGHT FOR CHILDREN ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THE 2011 QUALITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE AWARD

Washington, DC [April 15, 2011] – [Fight For Children](#), an independent non-profit organization committed to improving education in DC schools, today announced the winners of its 2011 Quality Schools Initiative. **Thurgood Marshall Academy**, a DC public charter high school, and **DC Preparatory Academy**, a DC public charter middle school, each won Champion of Quality awards and a \$50,000 grant from Fight For Children. **Cleveland Elementary**, a DC public school, and **Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School** were each awarded a Rising Star award and a \$25,000 grant. (See attached descriptions of each winning school.)

Now in its fourth year, Fight For Children’s Quality Schools Initiative program identifies and celebrates best practices that improve student achievement in DCPS, public charter, and independent schools in Washington, DC.

“We are thrilled to celebrate these terrific DC schools and the work their teachers and leaders do each and every day to give low income children solid opportunities for the future,” said Michela English, President and CEO of Fight For Children. “These schools are performing well and their results are strong. Their leaders strive continuously to raise the bar on student achievement. All of us at Fight For Children applaud their efforts and look forward to working with them to share their best practices with other schools.”

Fight For Children works closely with the winning schools over the period of a year to share their effective practices with other schools. This year’s awards recognized schools that use data

to improve instruction to increase academic achievement for low-income children. Fight For Children will produce case studies of the winning schools that will be used at trainings and roundtables beginning in the fall. An independent committee of leaders across DC's education spectrum selected the winning schools and finalists based on a thorough evaluation of their applications and on-site campus visits. A full list of committee members is attached.

D.C. State Superintendent of Education Hosanna Mahaley presented the awards to the four schools selected at a luncheon that was held on April 13. The awards luncheon was sponsored and presented by the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center.

Fight For Children will celebrate these winning schools at the School Night Gala on May 6 at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. Chaired by Audrey Marks, Ambassador of Jamaica, School Night will be a Caribbean infused celebration featuring a concert performance by Ziggy Marley. In addition to Ziggy Marley, the DC PanJammers and New Century Dance will perform. More information is available at [www.fightforchildren.org](http://www.fightforchildren.org).

**Fight For Children**, founded in 1990 by business and civic leader Joseph E. Robert, Jr., is a 501(c)(3) organization committed to providing all children in the District of Columbia the tools they need to grow, learn, and succeed. Fight For Children has raised \$82 million in private contributions, investing these resources to create education, leadership and health care programs, as well as providing direct support to over 150 youth-serving organizations in the greater DC area. For more information on Fight For Children or any of its programs, visit [www.fightforchildren.org](http://www.fightforchildren.org).

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## About the 2011 Quality Schools Initiative Award Winners

**Champion of Quality:** Preparing their students to succeed in college and to actively engage in our democratic society, **Thurgood Marshall Academy** serves 390 students in grades 9 to 12. Thurgood Marshall Academy was founded upon the belief—articulated by US Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall—that all children have the right to a first-class education and the opportunity to reach their full potential. As the District's first law-themed public charter high school, Thurgood Marshall Academy combines a comprehensive, standards-based curriculum with education about law, democracy, and human rights. Thurgood Marshall Academy's goal is to help students develop their own voices by teaching them the skills lawyers have—the ability to solve complex problems, think critically, and advocate persuasively for themselves and their communities. <http://www.thurgoodmarshallacademy.org>

**Champion of Quality: DC Preparatory Academy - Edgewood Middle Campus** is an award-winning, extended middle school serving 220 students in the 4th to 8th grades. With its dual focus on rigorous academics and character development DC Prep is ensuring that its graduates have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in competitive high schools and college. With its dual focus on rigorous academics and character development DC Prep is ensuring that its graduates have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in competitive high schools and college. DC Prep's 2010 DC CAS scores place it in the top three schools in Washington in reading and the top four in math. And when looking only at low-income students, DC Prep earns the #1 spot in reading and the #2 in math. <http://www.dcrep.org>

**Rising Star: Cleveland Elementary** is a DCPS school located in the historic Shaw neighborhood currently serving 543 students in kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grades. Cleveland approaches the learning of each child through his/her area of strength, ensuring success, high self-esteem, and continued motion for learning. Two years ago, the school collaborated with Achievement Network to enhance its use of data-driven instruction. Cleveland is among the few public schools in Washington to receive a rating of 9 out of 10 from GreatSchools. <http://www.clevelandelementary.org>

**Rising Star: The Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School** is located in the Brookland neighborhood in Ward 5 and serves 325 pre-k through sixth grade students. Stokes teaches children to think, speak, read, write and learn in two languages: English and French or English and Spanish. With a dual focus on excellence and community service, E.W. Stokes accomplishes its mission by creating an environment of achievement, respect and non-violence. E.W. Stokes also received a rating of 9 out of 10 from GreatSchools.

**2011 QUALITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE**  
**INDEPENDENT SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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1. Carey Wright, Chief Academic Officer, DCPS
2. Carmen James Lane, Program Officer, Meyer Foundation
3. Deborah Julian, Program Officer, Banyan Tree Foundation
4. Jennie Niles, Founder & Head of School, EL Haynes PCS
5. Josephine Baker, Executive Director, Public Charter School Board
6. Cathy Spencer, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Archdiocese of Washington
7. Mary Anne Lesiak, Director of Education, AppleTree Institute
8. Matt Radigan, Senior Master Educator, DCPS
9. Michelle Pierre-Farid, Executive Director, New Leaders for New Schools
10. Richard Lodish, Lower School Principal, Sidwell Friends School
11. Naomi DeVeaux, Director of School Design and Development, FOCUS
12. Mieka Wick, Associate Director, CityBridge Foundation
13. Kevin Hinton, DC Public Education Fund