



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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District honors teachers at Hazelwood West Middle, Lusher Elementary schools with Emerson™ Excellence in Teaching awards

Cathy Meyer and Cindy Cardwell are this year's recipients of the 2009 Emerson™ Excellence in Teaching Awards Program in the Hazelwood School District.

Meyer, an eighth grade math teacher at Hazelwood West Middle School, and Cardwell, the librarian at Lusher Elementary School, received surprise visits and bouquets of flowers from Dr. Mary Piper, interim superintendent, and Paula Brown, professional development specialist.

The Emerson™ Excellence in Teaching Awards program, sponsored by St. Louis-based Emerson™ Electric Company, annually recognizes 100 outstanding classroom educators from elementary and secondary schools and higher-education institutions.

Meyer was on her planning time when she spied a group of administrators, including Dr. Tyrone McNichols, assistant superintendent for school accountability, walking down the hall, led by Dr. Piper and the flowers.

"First, my thoughts were 'Wow, what's going on?' then when I figured it out, I was in complete shock," she said. "I was surprised they chose me after all of the great people who were nominated."

Meyer has taught math in Hazelwood for 20 years. She began teaching at Hazelwood West Junior/Senior High School, where she taught both junior high and high school math courses. She moved to the current Hazelwood West Middle School when it opened in 2007.

"Every year, there's a new group of kids and you have to find new strategies to reach them," Meyer said. "I can't let my guard down. I have to keep working hard to show that I deserve this award."

"I am so proud of Cathy and this honor that she is receiving through the Emerson Excellence Award," said Dr. Allison Klouse, principal at Hazelwood West Middle. "Cathy represents our

building and the District in a positive way through her dedication to students, dynamic teaching and desire to grow in her chosen profession.”

At Lusher, Dr. Steve Sandbothe, assistant superintendent for school accountability, joined the group in surprising Cardwell. Principal Dr. Julie Melton announced Cardwell’s win over the public address system, which caused students and staff to stream into the hallways where they applauded, hugged and congratulated her.

“I was surprised, extremely happy, I felt honored and I felt like I was going to cry, all at the same time,” Cardwell said. “It’s a marvelous breakthrough for librarians. Since I have been working as a librarian, I wanted to break the stereotype of the little old lady who tells the kids to be quiet.

“This is an accomplishment for all teachers and librarians who work very hard to instill the love of reading and learning in their students so they become life-long readers and learners.”

Cardwell started her career in Hazelwood at Jury Elementary School, where she taught first grade for six years. She then moved to Barrington Elementary School, where she also taught first grade for 11 years. She became certified as a librarian and moved to Lusher Elementary School, where she is now in her seventh year.

“I can easily say that Mrs. Cardwell truly loves reading,” said Melton. “She is constantly searching for books that will spark a student’s interest and develop their love for reading. Mrs. Cardwell is very deserving of this award.”

Cardwell wishes to thank two of her college professors, Maggie Newbold and Yvonne Gibbs, “who taught me everything I needed to know about being a fantastic librarian.”

Cardwell explained how winning the Emerson award will impact her teaching.

“I will keep doing the same things but any kind of positive reinforcement you get makes you want to work harder and to do more,” she said.

This is the 21st year for the Emerson™ program, which recognizes educators from around the metropolitan area for the essential role they play in shaping students’ lives. Meyer and Cardwell have been invited to a banquet November 1 at the Sheldon Concert Hall, where they will be formally honored as Emerson™ Excellence in Teaching winners.

Photo Information: Dr. Mary Piper, left, interim superintendent, congratulates Cathy Meyer, an eighth grade math teacher at Hazelwood West Middle School for winning the Emerson™ Excellence in Teaching honor at the secondary level for the Hazelwood School District.

Lusher Elementary School librarian Cindy Cardwell, left, is congratulated by Dr. Mary Piper, interim superintendent, Dr. Julie Melton, principal, and Dr. Steve Sandbothe, assistant superintendent for school accountability, after Cardwell learned she received the Emerson™ Excellence in Teaching award at the elementary level for the Hazelwood School District.

The Hazelwood School District is the second largest district in St. Louis County and serves nearly 19,000 students. Communities in the district include Hazelwood, Black Jack, Spanish Lake, a large section of Florissant, portions of Bridgeton, Bellefontaine Neighbors and Ferguson, and several square miles of unincorporated St. Louis County. The mission of the Hazelwood School District is to launch learners on a quest for high standards, fairness and distinguished achievement.

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