



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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CONTACT: Diana Gulotta, assistant superintendent for communications  
(314) 953-5005 or (314) 575-0503 cell

**Townsend Elementary teacher recognized by local newspaper for excellence in education**

The St. Louis American Foundation selected Michelle A. Pendleton of Townsend Elementary School in the Hazelwood School District to receive an Excellence in Education award through its annual program.

Pendleton, a pre-kindergarten teacher, will receive one of eight Excellence in Education awards at this year's Salute to Excellence in Education Scholarship and Awards Banquet on September 18 at the America's Center. The award is presented to local educators who exemplify high standards and accountability.

For 22 years, the St. Louis American's Salute to Excellence in Education program has honored "outstanding individual African-American educators and their work in the St. Louis community." Each year, the foundation recognizes a group of outstanding educators who are nominated by the community and then selected by a committee of "experts in the field."

Pendleton had no idea she'd been nominated. She found out when she got a phone call at work during the last week of school. When she heard that she'd been chosen as one of the winners, she asked "What did you say?"

"I asked myself, 'What did I do to get this honor?'" she said.

"I didn't know I was nominated, but they chose me for the work I've done and my experience," Pendleton explained. "This was really a surprise. I didn't see it coming."

"I've been thinking about all the children, all the students who I've crossed paths with, and to me, teaching is not accidental, it's a blessing. It's my blessing.

"Every year, I learn something and I teach differently, but it still feels like the first year I started teaching. The parents want you to be there for their child, and for them. They expect it," she said.

“Teaching is a passion. As long as I continue to fulfill that passion, I think I’m at my best.”

In 2008-2009, she was named building Teacher of the Year at Townsend Elementary. She was also named Hazelwood’s District Teacher of the Year for 2008-2009, making her eligible to apply for Missouri’s Teacher of the Year program. She applied this summer and will find out later this month if she is a candidate.

Pendleton has been in education for 30 years. Her first job after high school was as a teacher’s assistant at a daycare center in St. Louis. She has an associate’s degree in early childhood education from St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley and a bachelor of science in early childhood education from Harris-Stowe State College. Her formal teaching experience began with St. Louis Public Schools. She joined the Hazelwood School District in 2004.

Recent Salute to Excellence in Education honorees from the Hazelwood School District include Julia Robinson (Burke) Thorpe, assistant superintendent, student services; Dr. Tyrone McNichols, assistant superintendent, school accountability; and Zella Williams, assistant superintendent, school accountability. Williams retired from HSD in 2008.

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### **Photo Information**

**Pendleton\_TownsendElem** – Michelle A. Pendleton, pre-kindergarten teacher at Townsend Elementary School in the Hazelwood School District, will receive a Salute to Excellence in Education award from the St. Louis American Foundation in September.

*The Hazelwood School District serves nearly 19,000 students and is the second largest district in St. Louis County. 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.*