



from the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee
P.O. Box 11867, Room 227 Blatt Building
Columbia, South Carolina, 29211
Contact: Dana Yow, (803) 734-6164

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University of SC community partnership receives SC Literacy Champion Award

Columbia – The 2010 SC Literacy Champion Award has been given to the *Making Meaning through Literacy and Art Education: Community Partners in Learning* project, a collaborative effort between the University of South Carolina's College of Education and Department of Art. The award, which includes a grant of \$10,000, was presented to Dr. Tasha Tropp Laman, an Associate Professor in USC's College of Education and Dr. Karen Heid, an Associate Professor in Art Education.

The *Making Meaning* program, a service-learning project that combined art education and literacy achievement, was developed through a five-year collaboration between A.C. Moore Elementary School in Richland School District One and University of South Carolina faculty. Over the course of five years, the program has involved more than 650 A.C. Moore students and 300 USC undergraduate students. In Spring 2010, a poetry mosaic garden was completed at the school through a USC service learning grant, a USC Arts Institute Grant, the A.C. Moore Creative Arts Alliance, the Arts in the Basic Curriculum Grant, contributions from A.C. Moore Elementary School, the A.C. Moore Parent Teacher Organization, and the Hollywood Rose-Hill Neighborhood Association.

Accepting the award for *Making Meaning*, Dr. Laman stated, "At every turn, this project reflects the great things that happen when people come together in service of children's learning. Dr. Karen Heid and Mr. Randall Clamp coordinated every aspect of this project. A.C. Moore's principal, Dr. Chantelle Baker-Parnell and Richland School District One created a context and model for outstanding university, school, and community partnerships."

"The A.C. Moore teachers and staff brought their energy and expertise to this project while continuing to provide students with excellent literacy instruction each day," said Laman. "USC students, community members, the USC Office of Student Engagement and state and district officials embraced this project volunteering hundreds of service hours. We look forward to our next collaborative project this fall."

The SC Education Oversight Committee created the SC Literacy Champions Award in 2009 to recognize successful service-learning programs within postsecondary institutions focused on building reading skills among SC public school students in grades K-12. Research shows that if a student cannot read on a proficient level in the eighth grade, he only has a 50 percent chance of graduation from high school on time. The award is open to programs within all in-state degree-granting postsecondary institutions.

Grant funding support for the award was provided by the Central Carolina Community Foundation, a nonprofit organization serving eleven counties in the Midlands by distributing grants and scholarships and linking the resource for donors, nonprofits and community leaders to areas of need.

The SC Education Oversight Committee is an independent, non-partisan group made up of 18 educators, business persons, and elected leaders. Created in 1998, the committee is dedicated to reporting facts, measuring change, and promoting progress within South Carolina's education system.