



Honoring those who inspire the best in all of us.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Two Extraordinary Citizens Honored by SDL
with Essence of Humanity Awards**

Lancaster, Pa. (September 8, 2010) – Frank Albrecht and Darlene Taylor, both of Lancaster, were honored by the School District of Lancaster with an Essence of Humanity Award at an all-staff meeting September 8.

The Essence of Humanity Award recognizes individuals who, beyond the requirements of their work, demonstrate remarkable human qualities including courage, love, strength, determination, and persistence when dealing with adversity. The award also honors those who demonstrate a spirit of caring and provide inspiration to such individuals on a daily basis.

About Frank Albrecht

Serving as community liaison for the JP McCaskey High School and responsible for its Peer Mediation Program, Mr. Albrecht is instrumental in promoting peace and understanding in the community at large by assisting students, families, friends, and community members in learning how to resolve problems. He works constantly to highlight the futility of violence and promote instead the value of understanding others' points of view, listening, discussing, and making a plan for future action.

Completely generous with his time, Frank's dedication goes beyond the normal school day. His phone calls and home visits to students and their families extend into most evenings. He is a visible presence in neighborhoods ahead of trouble he may hear about, and he attends student activities to show love and support.

"His work is often the difference between a student dropping out and persisting to graduation," said nominating representative Nancy Kambouroglos.

Frank continually organizes people into informal groups to help throughout the community wherever the needs are. He coordinates groups to help clean homes of the elderly and repair and paint homes of those not in a position to do so. After one of the snow storms this past winter, Mr. Albrecht visited a newly widowed elderly woman to take her food, play his harmonica, read Scripture, and "give her his soul-lifting smile," recounts Kambouroglos.

Members of the Laurel Street Mennonite Church, Albrecht and his wife, Elizabeth Soto, frequently open their home for hospitality and temporary housing to people in need. Some of the wise words he is known for, and which he calls "life messages," include: seek peace, never go to bed angry, hug someone you love, use words, and live life to the fullest.

About Darlene Taylor

Serving as a clerical specialist for Lancaster County's Early Intervention program, Ms. Taylor also serves as a parent representative for McCaskey East High School and Chair for the School District of Lancaster Parent Advisory Committee. A single parent and graduate of Bridge of Hope, Ms. Taylor now serves on the Alumnae Council for Bridge of Hope.

Ms. Taylor first took an interest in parental involvement in education when her own children, who are now in high school, were elementary students. Ms. Taylor's leadership, commitment, and support of families, teachers, students, and staff has affected the lives of hundreds in a positive way, according to nominating representative Jill Martin.

"Last year, she logged more than 250 volunteer hours for the school district. If a family is in need, she will not stop until she finds the right resource to help them."

“Her amazing support, positive approach to conflict resolution, and continued perseverance in the face of adversity makes her an excellent candidate for this award,” said Martin.

A role model for many people, Darlene is “an active, empowered, and positive parent who cares deeply about the education of her children and those in her community,” said Martin. “Her commitment to volunteering and her ability to motivate others makes her an inspiring example of true partnership between families and schools.”

Ms. Taylor also serves on the Northeast Neighborhood Revitalization Advisory Committee and is Secretary Elect for the National Alliance of Black School Educators. She is a member of the Ebenezer Baptist Church.

About Essence of Humanity

The Essence of Humanity Award honors those who inspire the best in all of us, through both the award itself and also by elevating their inspirational stories. The program began in 2001 when business and community leaders in South-Central Pennsylvania established the award. The award is presented by participating organizations in collaboration with the Essence of Humanity program’s steering committee, which evaluates the nominations. For more information, contact Robin Stauffer, Executive Director, at 717-293-4498, or visit the website at www.essenceofhumanity.org.

About the School District of Lancaster

Established in 1836, the School District of Lancaster is the second oldest district in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The School District of Lancaster serves a diverse population of approximately 11,760 students: 55.5% Hispanic, 22.7% African American, 19.5% Caucasian, 2.3% Asian/other. The District's thirteen elementary schools, four middle schools, one high school campus and two alternative schools are home to approximately 1,620 staff members, including administrators, teachers, counselors, and support staff.

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