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For Immediate Release

CHARLES MACK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RECOGNIZED FOR “PROMISING PRACTICE” IN CHARACTER EDUCATION

Character Education Partnership selects winners to be honored in November

June 12, 2007 . . . Washington, DC – Over 100 schools and districts from around the United States as well as from Canada, Mexico, and Singapore will receive 130 awards for “Promising Practices” in character education. Charles Mack Elementary School will receive two awards for the “Think it Through Sheet” and the “Student Character Education Video.”

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) gives the annual awards for unique and specific exemplary practices that encourage the ethical, social, and academic growth of K–12 students through character education. By publicizing these awards, CEP hopes to recognize educators for their efforts and to encourage others to learn from and even replicate these successful initiatives.

The “Think it Through” sheet was created and implemented for students who are referred to the office for a behavior infraction. Students who are referred to the office complete the “Think it Through” sheet form prior to meeting with a member of the administrative team. The intention behind this document is to allow students to put in *their own words* what they perceive was the situation or incident that brought them to the office, and to think of some possible solutions. At the same time, it provides the administrative team with a starting point from which to “work through” the situation or incident with the student and allow for some very “teachable” character education moments. The practice of using the “Think it Through” sheet contributes to character education development in that it allows students the opportunity to immediately reflect on their actions, to express and identify their feelings along with the feelings of the other people involved in the situation, to think about alternative solutions to their problems, and it gives them an opportunity to think about other solutions that they can use if they should find themselves in another situation that requires positive conflict resolution. “As a result of using the Think it Through Sheets, students take more responsibility for their actions and the impact that their actions have on others,” stated Amy Freeman, Prevention Intervention Specialist.

The “Student Character Education Video” is the product of the school community developing definitions of its ethical values in terms of observable behaviors. Staff came together to plot out the production of the video and also created dramatic skits that demonstrated the six core traits of Respect, Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Caring, Giving, & Service, Leadership, Initiative, & Teamwork, and Justice & Fairness. The video helps to demonstrate appropriate behaviors and how they clearly connect to the core values. Students are also able to see their peers via the video and identify themselves as part of the same community. Seeing their peers and students that they

know, helps to build capacity and to encourage an environment of ownership for students and staff to successfully support the character education values. As we are a year around, multi-track school serving 1,000 students, we are always receiving new students or need to remind our student body of behavior expectations. The vice principal includes the video during behavioral expectation assemblies. In addition, teachers can check out the video at any time to review it with their students.

This year, CEP received 206 applications from 140 public and private schools and districts. Schools in New Jersey submitted the most applications and will receive the most awards, followed by Missouri, Michigan, and New York. Winning practices included creative ways to encourage positive relationships, recognize students for good behavior, and offer students opportunities to give back to their school and community. “These schools have found creative new ways to encourage their students to be better citizens who care about others,” stated Lara Maupin, program coordinator.

Charles Mack Elementary School will receive the awards at CEP’s 14th National Forum on Character Education. The theme for the event is “*Investing in America’s Future*.” It will be held November 1–3, 2007, in Arlington, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C. In addition, winning practices will be featured in CEP’s annual National Schools of Character publication and on the CEP Web site (www.character.org).

The Character Education Partnership, based in Washington, D.C., is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to developing young people of good character who become responsible and caring citizens. CEP is the nation’s leading advocate for quality character education initiatives.

The Promising Practices awards program is part of CEP’s National Schools of Character awards program. To learn more about applying to become a National School or District of Character or about applying for a Promising Practices Award in 2008, visit CEP’s Web site. Applications for Promising Practices awards must be submitted online by March 15, 2008.