



State Education Resource Center

PRESS RELEASE

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CT Parents Honored with Parental Involvement Day Awards at State Capitol

MIDDLETOWN, Conn. — Parents from across Connecticut are receiving 10 Parental Involvement Recognition Awards at a special ceremony at the State Capitol November 20.

The State Education Resource Center (SERC) and CT Parent Information and Resource Center (CT PIRC), operated by SERC, present these awards annually to coincide with National Parental Involvement Day. SERC and CT PIRC run the award program in collaboration with the Connecticut Commission on Children.

The ceremony is in the Old Judiciary Room from 10 a.m. to noon and includes Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Operating Officer of the CT State Department of Education; Joseph J. Vrabely Jr. of the CT State Board of Education; family members of the winners, and the individuals who nominated them; and SERC and CT PIRC administrators and staff.

CT PIRC sends a call for nominations to schools and program coordinators across Connecticut to find parents who have shown: active involvement in their child's or children's school or community; support of their local school and contributions to high-quality education for all children; evidence of their ability to make a difference in their local school or community; and dedication and advocacy to ensure equity for all parents and their children.

"Parental involvement sends a message to the community about the importance of education," said Dr. David R. Grice, an education consultant at SERC and CT PIRC who coordinates the awards program. "These parents are very dedicated. We consider them partners in achieving better outcomes for all kids."

This year has 10 awards for 16 parents. Winners are Junghwan and Erin Cha, for their work with the CREC Discovery Academy in **Hartford**; Tracy Dupont, on behalf of the Plymouth Early Childhood Council and the **Plymouth** community; Susan Errichetti, for her work at Central High School and Multicultural Magnet School in **Bridgeport**; Jill Jenkins, for the Partners Advancing Change in Education (PACE) in **Windsor** Public Schools; Stephen Kaczmarek, for South Windsor High School and the **South Windsor** community; Arbella Baba-Lanza of CREC Montessori Magnet School in **Hartford**; Eileen Marks, for the **Greenwich** Board of Education; Merary Cardona, Miriam Matos, Tatiana Mendoza, Sandra Ochoa, and Maria Eugenia Valderrama of the Parents of Students with a Dream (PS4D) program in **Norwalk**; Doriana Vicedomini for **Suffield** Public Schools; and Zophia Wozniak for LEARN, based in **Old Lyme**.

National Parental Involvement Day is an annual event launched by Project Appleseed, a St. Louis-based educational advocacy group that promotes parental involvement.

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The **State Education Resource Center (SERC)** (ctserc.org) provides professional development, resources, and a centralized Library to Connecticut educators, service providers, families, and others to support its vision: *Equity. Excellence. Education.*

The **CT Parent Information and Resource Center (CT PIRC)** (ctpirc.org) is based at SERC in Middletown and works with partners across Connecticut to ensure that families have a voice in education that is sought, respected, and valued.

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