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MEDIA RELEASE

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ASHWAUBENON'S KOWALCZYK AWARDED KOHL TEACHER FELLOWSHIP

Ashwaubenon, WI – May 2, 2016 – Pioneer Elementary School and Valley View Elementary School art teacher Kathleen Kowalczyk was one of 100 Wisconsin teachers honored as an Herb Kohl Educational Foundation Teacher Fellow this year. Recipients of this award will receive a \$3,000 grant and a \$3,000 matching grant for their school to be used for innovation in education. A recognition luncheon hosted by Kohl, the former U.S. Senator, was held on Sunday, April 17th at West De Pere High School.

Kohl Teacher Fellows are chosen for their demonstrated superior ability to inspire a love of learning in their students, have motivated others, and have provided meritorious service both inside and outside the classroom.

The arts curricula Kowalczyk developed and implements is a vibrant, hands-on, multicultural arts program that guides students to become independent creative thinkers while developing valuable lifelong learning skills. Kowalczyk draws upon the diverse cultural assets within students, families, and community to raise achievement for all students, inspire a love of learning, and engage parents. She connects with and uses ethnic and minority communities as part of the art curricula and seeks learning activities that are relevant to student's cultural experiences, while at the same time, encouraging them, as well as herself, to stretch beyond the familiar. Throughout her teaching career, she has passionately and expertly incorporated her international experiences and cultural artifacts into her teaching.

Kowalczyk has an insatiable thirst for gaining cultural experiences which she weaves into her own life and into the lives of her students. As a 2011 National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Scholar in Oaxaca, Mexico, she delved deeply into indigenous arts, including: ceramics, textiles, woodcarvings, and printmaking.

Her successful grant writing has generated exceptional learning opportunities. Kowalczyk was awarded two Planting Seeds of Knowledge grants leading to the creation of culturally responsive art units and brought Oneida artists into Ashwaubenon schools for interactive workshops and performances. She also worked with staff to identify stereotyping in children's books featuring American Indians.

Additionally, Kowalczyk was awarded an African Storytellers on Wheels grant that brought 20 UW-Madison African graduate students to Ashwaubenon to tell stories that inspired the children's imaginations and informed them of the diversity of African cultures. She created art units using hand-stamped Asante adinkra symbols and Ewe kente cloth weaving of Ghana. After learning about Ugandan women rising out of poverty in the Bead for Life project, her students shared what they learned and created recycled paper bead jewelry.

Her culturally responsive art curricula also includes an exploration of the language, history and culture of the Hmong and highlights appliqued textiles and embroidered pa ndau narrative story cloths.

The Kohl Foundation Scholarship and Fellowship program was established by former U.S. Senator Herb Kohl in 1990 to recognize educational excellence. To date, the foundation has awarded \$10.2 million to Wisconsin educators, students and schools.

For more information, please contact Kathleen Kowalczyk, Pioneer Elementary School, Art Teacher, at 920-492-2925 extension 6131 or kkowalczyk@ashwaubenon.k12.wi.us.

Picture Attached: ASD-DO-Kohl-Kowalczyk.jpg

Caption: Kohl award winner Kowalczyk (center) with Valley View Principal Kurt Weyers, Assoc. Principal Andy Bake, husband Dean and Pioneer Principal Pete Marto.

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