

# Education News & Notes

## Unsung Heroes Are Rewarded For Their Hard Work

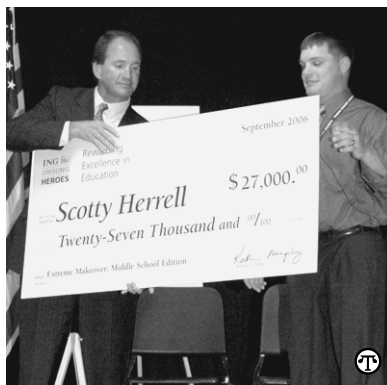
(NAPSA)—Each day, the nation's educators work hard to develop creative lesson plans and offer uniquely effective ways to help their students succeed—often dipping into their own pockets to help fund projects. Outside classroom walls, these efforts may go unnoticed.

Fortunately, an awards program has honored these “unsung heroes” for more than a decade and is committed to recognizing and rewarding educators for their hard work.

The ING Unsung Heroes® awards program recognizes the nation's kindergarten through 12th grade educators for their innovative teaching methods, creative educational projects and ability to make a positive influence on the children they teach. Since handing out the first award in 1996, the program has awarded more than \$2.5 million to more than 1,000 educators.

After receiving more than 1,100 applications this year and choosing 100 initial \$2,000 award winners, Scotty Herrell, a teacher at Clinton Middle School in Clinton, Tenn., was selected to receive the program's top prize. As the winner, Herrell will receive an additional \$25,000 for his “Extreme Makeover: Middle School Edition” service learning program.

Herrell's program will teach students how to use engineering principles for civic purposes in their community and beyond. The project will help improve the homes of those touched by tragedy through the application of carpentry, landscaping and design skills by his students.



**Teachers who positively influence their students are rewarded and honored as Unsung Heroes.**

Participating students will complete projects after school, on weekends and on breaks. Students will also help select make-over applicants, showing their involvement throughout the entire process. Key learning skills will be addressed over the course of the program as students apply math, science and pre-engineering principles to their design and construction ideas.

“Through Scotty's efforts, we have seen the level of excitement and motivation among our students increase tremendously,” said Sue Voskamp, principal of Clinton Middle School. “His dedication and excitement about the program provides our students the opportunity to experience the excitement of learning and service and has a lasting impact on the community.”

• The program's 2006 second-place award went to Brian Smithers of Portland, Ore., for his “Waste Not, Want Not: Making

Vegetable Bio-fuel from Waste Vegetable Oil” program. The program gives at-risk participants in sixth through eighth grade a chance to develop a usable alternate fuel. The idea behind the project is to make enough fuel to replace all of the school's unleaded fuel vehicles with those operated by diesel fuel. Smithers and his class want to reduce the amount of fossil fuels that the school consumes. Smithers and Open Meadow Middle School were awarded \$12,000.

• The third-place award went to Michael St. Pierre for his “Computer Architecture Learn & Serve” program to help salvage old computers and computer parts. His students refurbish donated computers and parts and put them back into working circulation in classrooms, libraries and community-based programs, as well as homes of children in such programs as ESL (English as a Second Language) and special education. St. Pierre and South Lafourche High School in Galliano, La., were awarded \$7,000.

To learn about this year's winning projects, as well as those from previous years, visit [www.ing.com/us/unsungheroes](http://www.ing.com/us/unsungheroes). For applications for the awards, emailing@scholarshipamerica.org or call (800) 537-4180.

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