



AMERICAN
SCHOOL
COUNSELOR
ASSOCIATION

Contact:
Cameron Thomas
(202) 955-5814
cthomas@voxglobal.com

POTOMAC VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR NAMED AS FINALIST FOR SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR

Melissa Masino from Alexandria, Virginia Among Top Eight

Alexandria, VA, January 25, 2010 – Melissa Masino, a school counselor from Potomac View Elementary School, has been named one of the top eight school counselors in America. Masino is one of more than 250 elementary, middle, and secondary school counselors nationwide who were nominated for the School Counselor of the Year award. The award, which is presented by the American School Counselor Association, honors the professionals who devote their careers to serving as advocates and often lifesavers for the nation's students.

A crucial component of Masino's counseling program is establishing mentoring partnerships to assist with the academic and social needs of her students. For example, she launched an award-winning mentoring partnership with the Quantico Marine Corps that has led to improved academic performance and reduced behavior referrals in the school.

Masino also spearheaded a collaborative effort to create the Big/Little Mentoring Partnership, which resulted in significant improvements in academic performance, conduct and attendance. Recognizing the lack of after school programs available for students in the area, she contacted a local high school to create a mentoring partnership that provides elementary students with individual attention from high school students. To reward mentors for volunteering Masino assists students in preparing for the SAT/ACT, utilizing her experience as a Kaplan Test Prep tutor, and offers to help them with their college applications.

"Ms. Masino is a portrait of what all school counselors should be," said Deborah Ransom, Supervisor of Elementary Counseling and Related Services, Prince William County Schools. "Her leadership, advocacy, collaboration and focus on addressing the need for systemic change, along with her dedication to students and families, are an inspiration to us all."

The School Counselor of the Year awards program was open to all 100,000 members of the school counseling profession. The top eight school counselors were nominated by their peers and administrators and judged by a select panel to be the "best of the best."

The candidates were judged on several criteria, including: creative school counseling innovations, effective counseling programs, leadership skills, and contributions to student advancement.

Masino is a leader both in her school and her community. She assists in emergency situations at all county schools as a member of the Critical Incident Team and is the creator and coordinator of the annual Sports Night, a friendly competition between staff at three local elementary schools to promote school spirit and wellness. In 2008, Masino was presented the "Student Services Above and Beyond Award" from Prince William County Schools in recognition of her significant contributions.

"School counselors make significant contributions to the overall well-being of students and their success," said Richard Wong, Executive Director, American School Counselor Association. "They have unique qualifications and skills that allow them to address students' academic achievement, personal/social and career development needs."

Masino, along with the other seven finalists, will be flown to Washington, D.C., on January 27, 2010, for three days of celebratory events. The honorees will have meetings with their Members of Congress, attend a Congressional briefing and reception, and be formally recognized at a black-tie gala.

The legislative co-sponsors for the 2010 School Counselor of the Year program are: Senators Lisa Murkowski from Alaska and Arlen Specter from Pennsylvania and Representatives Raul Grijalva from Arizona and Vernon Ehlers from Michigan. The 2010 program is sponsored in part by Naviance,

the Universal Technical Institute (UTI), and the American Federation of Teachers.

For additional information on the American School Counselor Association, please visit www.schoolcounselor.org.

About the American School Counselor Association

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) professional organization based in Alexandria, VA. ASCA promotes student success by expanding the image and influence of professional school counseling through leadership, advocacy, collaboration and systemic change. ASCA helps school counselors guide their students toward academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning to help today's students become tomorrow's productive, contributing members of society. Founded in 1952, ASCA currently has a network of 50 state associations and a membership of more than 26,000 school counseling professionals.

###