

## MCPSRA SPECIAL PROJECT WINS NATIONAL ACCLAIM

The success of the MCPSRA **Toolkits, Books, and Backpacks Project** truly reached new heights this year! After being recognized with a Community Service Award from MRSPA in May, MCPSRA was nominated for a national award by MRSPA, our state association. In late July notification arrived that our association, because of this project, had been selected to receive a 2008 National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) *With Our Youth! Award of Excellence*. This award is presented annually by NRTA: AARP's Educator Community and was initiated nine years ago to recognize outstanding volunteer work with children and youth to provide meaningful educational and life-skills support to America's children. Only nine projects from across the United States were selected to receive this honor. MCPSRA Special Projects Committee co-chairs, Joan Donovan and Trish Bendler, were invited to attend a weekend of NRTA/AARP events September 5 – 8 in Washington, DC. On September 7<sup>th</sup>, they received this very prestigious award at the NRTA Gala Banquet and Ceremony on behalf of all the members of the MCPS Retirees Association. Also in attendance were Fred Evans, MCPSRA President, and our state MRSPA leaders President Chuck Ridgeway, Vice President Ron Ruffo, and Executive Director Judy Zahren. This project would never have reached such heights without the generosity, caring, and commitment of approximately 300 donating association members, Maryland Senator Rona Kramer and Maryland House of Delegates member Karen Montgomery, the MCTFCU, State Farm Insurance Company who provided us with a very generous grant, many sponsoring community groups and associations, and a committee of very hard workers. Our association has every reason to be proud of what has been accomplished through this project for the betterment of the educational environment and well-being of Montgomery County's school children.

In summary of this project, 1315 toolkits for Title I summer school kindergartners were assembled and distributed at 29 school program sites, 1600 brand new books were purchased and distributed to fourth and fifth grade summer school participants, and 36 backpacks were assembled for homeless children. **Golden Tales: Myths, and Folktales from Latin America**, by Montgomery County author Lulu Delacre, was selected for the fourth graders. After hearing that her book had been selected, Ms. Delacre rearranged her busy schedule to visit and read a selection from her book to the children at Georgian Forest ES on July 29<sup>th</sup> and to sign each of the children's books. Last year's fundraising total of \$15,000 was bettered by almost \$5,000 to enable all of this to come to fruition.

Now it's time to start all over for next summer! PLEASE consider sponsoring one or more toolkits by completing the form in the newsletter and mailing it, with your **tax-deductible** donation, to Mrs. Joan Donovan, Special Projects Committee Co-Chair. Our association is now recognized across not only our county and state but also the entire nation for this project. Let's keep the success going!

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### MCPSRA TOOLKITS SPONSORSHIP FORM

Please provide (print clearly) the following information and mail it along with a check (payable to: **MCPS Educational Foundation**, with "**Toolkits Project**" on the memo line) to Mrs. Joan Donovan, 13 Hilton Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20882-3521

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to sponsor # \_\_\_\_\_ toolkits at \$10 per kit. Donation enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Optional: In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Send acknowledgement to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_