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Teacher to be honored for instilling civic activism in students

The Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust (COE) will present an award to a high school teacher for outstanding work in inspiring students to be active and engaged citizens as part of Ethical Governance Day 2014. The presentation will take place in the multipurpose room at Design and Architecture Senior High (DASH), 4001 NE 2nd Avenue at 9:20 AM on Wednesday, October 29th. Nearly 125 students as well as school officials will be on hand for the presentation.

The award – the first of its kind by the Ethics Commission – will be presented to **Zudannie Nunez-Hernandez**, a world history and humanities instructor at DASH. Last year, she and her students placed second in the nation in a national competition to feed the hungry known as Lead2Feed Student Leadership Challenge, created by USA TODAY Charitable Foundation and Lift a Life Foundation. Ms. Nunez-Hernandez's student team, *Phantom Feeders*, provided meals to more than 2,370 people during the school year, as well as increasing awareness of hunger issue through posters, videos and an original song. They donated the \$5,000 prize to Miami's Camillus House. Additionally, while a teacher at Ponce de Leon Middle School in Coral Gables several years ago, Ms. Nunez-Hernandez inspired her students to assist victims of the earthquake in Haiti, creating brochures, public service announcements, letters and posters to support the charity and solicit needed items for an orphanage caring for children who lost their homes in the disaster.

In creating the award, Ethics Commission Executive Director Joseph Centorino cited educator and humanitarian Dr. Johnnetta Cole, who once said, "An education that teaches you to understand something about the world has done only half of the assignment. The other half is to teach you to do something about making the world a better place."

"Ms. Nunez-Hernandez exemplifies that goal – helping students to help improve their community," said Centorino. "We hope the establishment of this award will inspire more teachers to share the goals of civic activism and service learning within their classrooms."

Ethical Governance Day was created to help raise awareness that only through interest, attention and participation will our government bodies be more responsive to their constituents and ethical in their activities. By scheduling volunteers who are active in the community to speak to every 12th grade student in government and economics classes, it is hoped the teenagers will use what they learn as they embark on their futures. Many, who will be voting for the first time in the days that follow, will be encouraged to seek reliable resources as they make their election decisions.

October 29th has been proclaimed Ethical Governance Day 2014 by the Miami-Dade School Board, Board of County Commissioners and by several municipalities. In addition to placing a community leader in every 12th grade government and economics class in Miami-Dade Public Schools, the Public Defender and State Attorney offices are helping to place speakers the Juvenile Detention Center.

The Ethics Commission was created in 1996 as an independent agency with advisory and quasi-judicial powers. It is composed of five members, serving staggered terms of four years each. Through a program of education, outreach and enforcement, the Commission seeks to empower the community and bolster public trust.

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