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Middle School Civics Teacher Earns Ethics Honor

The chairwoman of a middle school social studies department engaged in leading her students to success in community activism has earned the 2015 Ethical Governance Day Teacher Award, presented by the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust. **Ingy Cruz** will receive the honor at a special assembly at **9 a.m. on Thursday, October 22nd, in the “Elementary Café” at the Bob Graham Education Center, 15901 NW 79 Avenue in Miami Lakes.**

Ms. Cruz is being recognized for her dedicated contributions to civics education during her teaching career. The 2006 Lawton Chiles Middle School *Teacher of the Year* has led her teams to win the district first place in Middle School Mock Trial competition in 2014 and second place in 2015.

Her students also earned first place statewide in the Project Citizen Portfolio Showcase and Oral Hearings in 2014 and 2015. The purpose of Project Citizen is to engage youngsters in the legislative process by having them identify a community problem and propose a public policy solution. In 2014, her students created “Life on the Line,” addressing the need to provide protection of Good Samaritans who report alcohol-related medical incidents. The 2015 project focused on trying to increase job opportunities for adults with Autism. This year’s Project Citizen endeavor is to help prevent the loss of life for children from undetected heart disease.

In addition to planning and implementing various civic programs and community fundraisers, Ms. Cruz also serves as liaison for the Close Up program that sends students to Washington, D.C., to learn more about government. After graduating from Florida International University, the Hialeah resident was named 1997 *Beginning Teacher of the Year* at Miami Lakes Middle School.

The presentation to Ms. Cruz will be part of activities on Ethical Governance Day, Thursday, October 22, when more than 200 civic leaders will speak to 12th graders in high schools throughout Miami-Dade County.

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.