

RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
SUSAN B. WILSON CIVIC EDUCATION MERIT AWARD CEREMONY
AGENDA

Wednesday, June 9, 2010

Musical Entertainment

The West Bay Guitar Ensemble

Pledge of Allegiance

The National Anthem

played on the fugelhorn by Mr. Joseph Smith

Welcome & Mission of the League of Women Voters

Martha Frutchey, Chairwoman of the LWV Education Fund

Keynote Speaker

Ms. Amanda Pereira, a student member of Young Voices

Introduction by Ms. Karen Feldman – Director of Young Voices, Providence

Background & Purpose of the Susan B. Wilson Award

Pamela Ancheta, President of the South Kingstown/Narragansett LWV

1st Place Award: Introduction by Ms. Lila Sapinsley

Ms. Deborah Marcello & Mr. Greg Quirk – Social Studies Teachers at
Portsmouth Middle School

2nd Place Award: Introduction by Mr. James Frutchey

Recipient: Ms. Susan Squillante of Feinstein Middle School in Coventry

Conclusion

Karen Asher, Chairwoman of the Civic Education Merit Award Committee

Reception immediately following

Ms. Deborah Marcello & Mr. Greg Quirk Social Studies Teachers at Portsmouth Middle School

The US Election Process Unit developed by Ms. Marcello, gives students an opportunity to learn how the election process works by directly participating in an election, both as a candidate and poll worker. The students join a political party and prepare a campaign for themselves as a presidential candidate for the 8th grade class. Primary elections in both parties yield candidates who make commercials and give speeches in front of the entire class. A general election is held and students elect a class president. The entire 8th grade class, (approximately 230 students) participates.

The goal of the program is to make the students understand that the citizen plays an integral and crucial role in the election process. Many middle school aged students are still concrete thinkers and learn best when they can get involved in a "hands on" or role-playing project. The US Election Process Unit was created to use this active strategy to teach how the election process works and the importance of the role of the citizen in our democratic nation.

Students create a portfolio of work representing their campaign for president. Students research current events and talk to parents/adults to identify four issues for their platforms. Students pick a point of view and use their opinions as the basis of their campaigns. This part of the project is a key component because it requires the students begin a dialogue with adults about current events issues. It also helps to reinforce the concept that people must be informed voters in order to be good voters. Students also create a pamphlet, bumper sticker, and television commercial.

Direct quotes from students:

"From this election unit, I learned a lot of things. I learned about how the election really works in general. Instead of watching the news, and not understanding it, I knew what they were talking about. Lastly, almost every single night I sat down with my dad and talked about the electing process. This unit was a good experience, and I learned a ton out of it, and it brought me closer to my father."

"...I learned that it is fun to vote because you feel like your decision can be the one that changes the world. I really liked this voting process and it helped me know more about what is going on in the world."

Ms. Susan Squillante Feinstein Middle School in Coventry

Susan Squillante is an educator who has demonstrated high levels of commitment and professional involvement. She attended numerous state and national professional development opportunities, which led her to be a local and national civic education trainer.

She is a trainer for two civic education programs, Project Citizen and the School Violence Prevention Demonstration (SVPDP) Program. As a Project Citizen trainer, she has helped numerous teachers to work with students to understand public policy and find democratic ways to influence or change policy.

This summer, Susan will be an instructor in the Northeast Project Citizen Summer Institute at Salve Regina University. In SVPDP, she is working with teachers from Providence and Central Falls to understand the Foundations of Democracy by articulating topics such as: Authority, Responsibility, Privacy and Justice. As these topics are transferred to students, her goals are to help lower the levels of violence and bullying in schools. Coventry, her school district, is part of the national Serve and Learn network. She is helping her colleagues to understand the linkage between Service Learning and Project Citizen. Coventry is now expanding civic education to most of its students. Susan has begun a project to align civic education standards to the NECAP Literacy Standards. She strongly believes that as all teachers are literacy teachers and they also can be civic educators.