



NJDOE News

For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:
Richard Vespucci
Jon Zlock
609-292-1126

For Release: October 9, 2003

Cresskill Junior-Senior High School Educator Announced as a \$25,000 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award Recipient *Second of Two NJ Award Recipients Announced Today in Bergen County*

Governor James E. McGreevey and Commissioner of Education William L. Librera, in collaboration with the nationally lauded Milken Family Foundation, are pleased to announce Beverly Plein, a Cresskill Junior-Senior High School teacher, is the recipient of a 2003 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award.

Plein, a 17-year educator who teaches Home Economics and serves as the school's technology facilitator, is the second of two New Jersey recipients announced this year. Amy Biasucci, of Cranford High School in Union County, was recognized Tuesday.

Plein, who holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Home Economics from Montclair State University and a master's degree in educational technology from Long Island University, was described by her peers as a "quiet leader who has had a profound impact on both her students and her colleagues."

The state of New Jersey and the Milken Family Foundation are in the second year of a partnership. Founder Lowell Milken, the foundation's chairman, created the award program in 1985. Plein's award was announced this afternoon at a surprise Milken Family Foundation Assembly at the Junior-Senior High School.

"Today, the state is proud to honor Beverly Plein with a 2003 Milken National Educator Award," Commissioner of Education William L. Librera said. "She is precisely the type of teacher Governor McGreevey and I are pleased to recognize. Her credentials are impeccable and her views, experience and excellence should be shared throughout the state."

Since 1985, the Milken National Awards Program, which honors teachers, principals and specialists in public education from kindergarten through 12th grade, has become the largest teacher recognition program in the United States. There were six (6) recipients in New Jersey last year.

By the end of October, the foundation will have presented about \$50 million to nearly 2,000 educators nationwide. The award was first presented in 1987 in California.

The foundation's chief goal recognizes that outstanding teachers who continue to learn are essential in fostering student growth, improving schools and enhancing the education profession.

Plein's excellence in the classroom befits the Governor's 21-point plan for education reform. Lauding teachers who continue to provide quality education for students statewide is paramount for Governor McGreevey and the Department of Education.

Plein received the award during a surprise assembly attended by Commissioner Librera and other distinguished guests, including Lucille Davy, Governor McGreevey's Special Counsel for Education.

"The state of New Jersey is extremely fortunate to have such wonderful examples of excellence in the classroom," Commissioner Librera said. "We are dedicated to recognizing teachers like Beverly Plein and sharing their successes so that we can continue to celebrate the many fine efforts of teachers statewide."

Teachers are recommended for the prestigious award without their knowledge by a blue-ribbon panel appointed by a state's Department of Education. Recipients of the Milken Awards are selected based on the following criteria:

- Exceptional educational talent as evidenced by outstanding instructional practices in the classroom, school and profession;
- Outstanding accomplishment and strong, long-range leadership potential for professional and policy

- leadership; and
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community at large.

Plein and other recipients nationwide are presented with their \$25,000 award checks at the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference, an all-expense paid professional development conference held in Washington, D.C. They also join the Milken Educator Network, a coalition of more than 1,700 top educators who have access to a variety of expert resources to help cultivate and expand innovative programs in their classrooms, schools and districts.

For more information about the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards, please contact the Department of Education Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126 or the Milken Family Foundation at (310) 998-3009.

Additional information can be found on the Milken Family Foundation's Web site, www.mff.org.