



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **THIRTY-NINE VALLEY SCHOOLS HONORED BY BEAT THE ODDS INSTITUTE**

**PHOENIX, AZ (October 29, 2009)**—Thirty-nine metro Phoenix-area schools were presented with Beat the Odds Awards for academic improvement Wednesday evening, October 28, at a ceremony hosted by the Phoenix-based Beat the Odds Institute.

The awards mark major milestones toward attaining the title of a “Beat the Odds School”—one in which individual student achievement is better than expected as a result of implementing research-based principles that are within every school’s control.

Schools receiving the silver award for 2008-2009 performance attained the highest possible award in what was the second year of a multi-year program. The silver-level designation requires schools to demonstrate academic growth in the majority of students in reading and math internal test scores.

In addition, they must meet the criteria for bronze status, which includes effectively implementing research-based leadership principles school-wide, and receiving at least a “performing” AZ LEARNS label from the Arizona Department of Education for the 2008-2009 school year.

The highest level of achievement is the gold Beat the Odds Award, which confers the title of a “Beat the Odds School.” Schools will be eligible for the gold designation at the end of the current school year, and thereafter.

“Beat the Odds is a practical approach to school improvement that works,” commented Beat the Odds Institute Director Marjorie Kaplan. “It leverages schools’ existing programs and efforts by focusing on six key elements that are within every school’s control, and provides ongoing support throughout the year. The overall effect is to help move Arizona schools toward improved individual student achievement.”

### **SILVER BEAT THE ODDS AWARD RECIPIENTS (School Name (City), Principal)**

#### **Gilbert Unified School District**

Gilbert Junior High School (Gilbert), Kevin Rainey  
Harris Elementary School (Mesa), Becky Henderson

#### **Isaac School District #5**

Mitchell Elementary School (Phoenix), Linda Crawford

#### **Phoenix Elementary School District #1**

Emerson Elementary School (Phoenix), Garthanne de Ocampo

**(MORE)**

**(Silver BTO Awardees, Continued)**

**Tempe School District**

Aguilar Elementary School (Tempe), Jolyn Gibbons  
Curry Elementary School (Tempe), Rey Cruz  
Evans Elementary School (Tempe), Hilda Carr-Gaona (currently principal of Arredondo Elementary School)  
Frank Elementary School (Guadalupe), Bernadette Kadel (currently principal of Nevitt Elementary School)  
Gililand Middle School (Tempe), Rick Horvath  
Holdeman Elementary School (Tempe), Wendy Reeck  
Laird School (Tempe), Mark Eley  
McKemy Middle School (Tempe), Ardie Sturdivant  
Scales Technology Academy (Tempe), David Diokno  
Thew Elementary School (Tempe), Julie Schroeder

**Washington Elementary School District**

Washington Elementary School (Phoenix), Dave McNeil  
Desert View Elementary School (Phoenix), Paulette Zuroff

**BRONZE BEAT THE ODDS AWARD RECIPIENTS (School Name (City), Principal)**

**Alhambra Elementary School District**

Cordova Middle School (Phoenix), Greg Gunn  
Sevilla Primary School (Phoenix), Mandi Caudill

**Balsz School District #31**

Balsz Elementary School (Phoenix), Taime Bengochea  
Brunson-Lee Elementary School (Phoenix), Mario Tijerina

**Cartwright Elementary School District**

Holiday Park Elementary School (Phoenix), Deby Valadez  
Peralta Elementary School (Phoenix), Mary Kay Radavich

**Creighton Elementary School District**

Larry C. Kennedy Elementary School (Phoenix), Sean Hannafin  
Squaw Peak Elementary School (Phoenix), Arnette Wessel

**Deer Valley Unified School District**

Barry Goldwater High School (Phoenix), Mike Andersen

**Dysart Unified School District**

Thompson Ranch Elementary School (El Mirage), Fran Sperling

**Isaac School District #5**

J.B. Sutton Elementary School (Phoenix), Marco Ruiz

**Littleton Elementary School**

Quentin Elementary School (Avondale), Jazmin Pacheco

**Mesa Public Schools**

Lincoln Elementary School (Mesa), Arlinda Mann  
Lowell Elementary School (Mesa), Sandi Kuhn

**(MORE)**

**(Bronze BTO Awardees, Continued)**

**Paradise Valley Unified School District #69**

Campo Bello Elementary School (Phoenix), Janice Moore  
Echo Mountain Intermediate (Phoenix), Bennett MacKinney  
Echo Mountain Primary (Phoenix), Cynthia Daniels

**Pendergast School District**

Amberlea Elementary School (Phoenix), Brenda Martin  
Copper King Elementary School (Phoenix), Molly Watson

**Tolleson Union High School District**

La Joya Community High School (Avondale), Cheryl Ingram  
Sierra Linda High School (Phoenix), Tim Madrid  
Tolleson Union High School (Tolleson), Tom Hernandez  
Westview High School (Avondale), Brandi Haskins

The Beat the Odds Institute is providing training, assistance and support to 85 Arizona principals statewide during the current academic year. The institute seeks to expand its program to 120 schools in 2010-2011.

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**About the Beat the Odds Institute**

The Beat the Odds Institute, an initiative of the Center for the Future of Arizona, was established in 2007 to implement the results of a CFA research study aimed at increasing academic achievement in schools with mostly low-income, minority students. Today, this nonprofit organization offers training and support nationwide to principals implementing the Beat the Odds concepts with the goal of achieving better than expected academic performance for students in this challenging demographic group. Dr. Marjorie Kaplan is director of the Beat the Odds Institute. For more information, visit [www.beattheoddsinstitute.org](http://www.beattheoddsinstitute.org).

**About the Center for the Future of Arizona**

The Center for the Future of Arizona is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to creating opportunities and quality of life for all Arizonans. A self-described “do tank,” the center helps to shape Arizona’s future through public policy, collaborative partnerships and research focusing on critical issues facing the state. The Phoenix-based nonprofit was founded in 2002 by Arizona State University President Emeritus Lattie Coor, who is the center’s chairman and CEO. For more information, visit [www.arizonafuture.org](http://www.arizonafuture.org).

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