



## PRESS RELEASE

Atlanta, DATE

### **FREDERICKSBURG EDUCATOR IS RECOGNIZED AS AN “UNSUNG HERO” AND WINS \$2,000 FOR AN INNOVATIVE TEACHING PROGRAM**

*The ING Unsung Heroes® Program Celebrates 15 Years of Awarding Nearly \$3.8 Million and  
Honoring Innovation and Creativity Among the Nation’s Educators*

This year marks the 15th anniversary of the ING Unsung Heroes Program that honors educators who have a significant impact on the lives of youth, but remain tremendously under-appreciated and unrecognized. One of the winning programs in the 2011 ING Unsung Heroes awards competition was submitted by Margaret McNamara, a teacher at Holy Cross Academy in Fredericksburg. She is going back to school with a \$2,000 ING Unsung Heroes grant. By receiving the ING Unsung Heroes award McNamara is recognized as one of the nation’s most innovative educators. She was one of only 100 winners across the country who received a \$2,000 award to help fund “Students Helping Students: Bully Prevention Through Writing”, her innovative idea, and bring it to life. She will now compete with other winners for one of the top three prizes — an additional \$5,000, \$10,000 or \$25,000.

“Students Helping Students: Bully Prevention Through Writing” is the winning program developed by McNamara to address the issue of bullying. Bullying impacts students across the country each day and is not easily solved by traditional teaching methods. Through the innovative program, third-grade students at Holy Cross Academy will develop an electronic survey to assess the attitudes about bullying among other students at their school. The survey will ask students questions such what constitutes bullying and if they have been bullied before. After the students collect and plot the data, they will work with the guidance counselor to interpret the survey results and determine what skills and areas should be focused on to benefit the needs of their school community. The next phase of the program will include the students creating project-based learning activities such as PowerPoint presentations, a wiki site, and video skits. All of the material will be posted on the school website and used by the counselor for monthly classes. For the final phase, students will evaluate student attitudes and discuss the effectiveness of the project. McNamara, who lives in Fredericksburg, hopes the program will open doors to foster discussion among students, teachers, and parents about bullying.

“ING is proud to celebrate this milestone of our Unsung Heroes program and is honored to recognize the hard work and dedication of our nation’s teachers,” said Brian Comer, president, Public Markets, ING U.S. Retirement Services. “Fifteen years ago we made the commitment to invest in the innovative program ideas from educators in states, cities, and schools across the United States who make the daily investment of preparing our children for the future. It has been a winning investment. We hope the additional funds Margaret McNamara was awarded through the ING Unsung Heroes program will help to sustain her program and continue to make an impact on the children she serves and her community.”

ING, a leading provider of retirement plans and programs for teachers, began the Unsung Heroes Awards Program in 1996 to demonstrate the company’s commitment to the education community. Over the years, the program has awarded 1,600 Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade educators for their breakthrough projects to bring classroom teaching to new heights. The very first top winner, Debrah Fordice in Dubuque, Iowa, won for her “Bethany Home Biography” project where students traveled to a nearby nursing home to interview residents about their lives. Other winning ideas have included “Techmobile” submitted in 2001 by Cathleen Hightower in New Orleans to help bridge “the digital divide”, and last year’s top winner, Jeremy Stone in New Haven, Conn. for his “Environmental Ventures” program to influence students to become the next generation of “green” entrepreneurs. All of the winning projects over the years have exemplified teachers who utilize innovative and engaging teaching methods and techniques to improve learning for America’s students.

Since honoring the first “unsung hero” in 1996, ING has awarded nearly \$3.8 million to 1,600 educators across the United States for their innovative teaching methods, creative educational projects, and ability to positively influence the children they teach. The 2011 ING Unsung Heroes winners were selected from a group of more than 1,400 applications. To learn more about this year’s winning projects, as well as those from previous years, visit the ING Unsung Heroes website at [www.unsungheroes.com](http://www.unsungheroes.com). More information about the program can also be found on the ING Unsung Heroes Facebook page, [facebook.com/unsungheroesgrant](https://www.facebook.com/unsungheroesgrant) where people can “Like” and share the page to encourage more educators to apply. Applications for the 2012 ING Unsung Heroes awards are available on the website.

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