



**PRESS CONTACTS:** Sarah Melnitsky  
smelnitsky@cronin-co.com  
AnnMarie Kemp  
akemp@cronin-co.com  
Cronin and Company, LLC  
(860) 659-0514

**RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES® HONORS TEN AREA TEACHERS WITH LOCAL HERO AWARDS**

*Grants \$5,000 to Schools in Connecticut and Western Massachusetts in Honor of the Teachers*

**HARTFORD, CONN./ TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2010** – This evening, Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC®) of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts honored 10 area teachers with the fourth annual RMHC Local Hero Awards. The selected teachers from Connecticut and Western Massachusetts have all exhibited tremendous dedication to their profession and outstanding efforts in servicing their schools and communities. The recipients were honored by the RMHC Board of Directors at a reception at the Connecticut Governor’s Residence in Hartford and were joined by Superintendents and Principals from their respective districts and schools, as well as other invited guests including local McDonald’s owners and Ronald McDonald himself. Commemorative plaques were presented to the ten teachers, and RMHC donated a total of \$5,000 to area schools through \$500 grants for each honoree’s respective school.

“Our Board of Directors is proud to acknowledge these exceptional teachers for their tireless commitment and important service,” says Laura Phillips Ward, President of RMHC of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts. “Our RMHC chapter awards grants to local nonprofits that provide a brighter future for children, with a particular focus on supporting education. With the Local Hero Awards, we are able to thank the devoted professionals who help children everyday – our outstanding area teachers.”

“It is a privilege to join the supporters of RMHC in commending and celebrating these teachers for their generous contributions, distinguished service and outstanding leadership,” says Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell. “Our valued teachers provide a firm foundation for the progress and accomplishments of our children and young adults, who are of course the promise of our future. I am always happy to discover and praise the exceptional performance of a teacher.”

There is no application or nomination process for the RMHC Local Hero Awards. Instead, the local charity works closely with partnering organizations, such as the Connecticut Association of Schools and the Massachusetts Department of Education, to identify these "Heroes" throughout the region. The 2010 Local Hero Award recipients are as follows:

1. **Ann Grosky**, Special Education teacher, Ralph C. Mahar Regional High School, Orange, MA
2. **Joanne Jukins**, 2nd grade teacher, Macdonough Elementary School, Middletown, CT
3. **Bruce Miller**, School Counselor, Northwestern Regional Middle School, Winsted, CT
4. **Thomas Moore**, Special Education teacher, Lincoln Middle School, Meriden, CT
5. **Pamela Nowak**, English teacher, East Lyme High School, East Lyme, CT
6. **Floris Wilma Ortiz**, English Language Learner teacher, Amherst Regional Middle School, Amherst, MA
7. **Michael Pearce**, Reading Specialist, Highland Park Elementary School, Manchester, CT
8. **Joshua Rice**, American History teacher, Springfield Central High School, Springfield, MA
9. **Kathy Seales**, Special Education Resource teacher, Harbor Elementary School, New London, CT
10. **Jill Wnuk**, Social Studies teacher, East Hartford Middle School, East Hartford, CT

Since 1988 RMHC of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts has provided more than \$6 million to over 400 non-profit organizations, helping thousands of area children lead happier, healthier and more productive lives. RMHC and its global network of local chapters in over 50 countries and regions have awarded more than \$460 million in grants and program services supporting children worldwide. For more information about RMHC or to apply for a grant, please call Carole Bowman at (860) 659-0514 or visit [www.rmhc-ctma.org](http://www.rmhc-ctma.org), or connect on the “Ronald McDonald House Charities of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts” [Facebook page](#).