



For Immediate Release

For More Information:

Stephanie McKissic

Education Coordinator

National Constitution Center

smckissic@constitutioncenter.org

215-409-6645

Myron Yoder

Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator

Allentown School District

484-765-4091

yoderm@allentownsd.org

Melissa Marcks

Principal, Ritter Elementary School

marcksm@allentownsd.org

484-765-5661

Susan L. Williams, APR, MA

Susan Williams & Associates

610-366-2155

suewill@ptd.net

ASD STUDENTS AWARDED FIRST PLACE IN STATEWIDE CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

(Allentown, PA, May 22, 2005) – The National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, recently announced that ASD’s Ritter Elementary School teacher Amy Weber and her fifth grade class placed first in the statewide Project Citizen civic education program, in which the students focused on public policy initiatives and political participation. Sue Kandianias’s fifth grade class, also from Ritter Elementary School, placed third in the competition, placing Ritter Elementary School and the Allentown School District at the top of the standings, a trend that has developed for several years now. Weber’s class addressed the need to combat childhood obesity by challenging the school to provide

healthy snack alternatives. Kandianis' class created the campaign, "Ritter Fights Graffiti," by combating the problem right around their school environment.

"We are very proud of our students and teachers," says Ritter principal, Melissa Marcks. "Childhood obesity is a challenging problem and our students rose to the occasion with insightful policies to make a difference."

The first place project will compete against 49 other state winners in August in Seattle, Washington, at the annual conference for the National Council of State Legislators. Ritter Elementary School and the Allentown School District participate in the civic engagement program the *We the People* program offered by the Civic Education Center. This is part of the larger School Violence Prevention Demonstration program.

In last year's Project Citizen national competition, Sue Kandianias and her students', "Ritter Against Litter" project represented the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in Salt Lake City, Utah, having won first place statewide in the 2004 Pennsylvania State Project Citizen competition. Teacher and students received an exceptional rating, the second highest rating on the national level.

About Project Citizen

Sponsored by the National Council of State Legislators, Project Citizen is a civic education program that promotes competent and responsible participation in state and local government. Through active engagement, students work together on a class project

to identify and study a public policy issue, eventually developing an action plan for implementing their policy, and a portfolio for display. More than twenty classes across the Commonwealth vied for the opportunity to represent Pennsylvania in the national competition. For more information on the Project Citizen program, visit www.civiced.org.

About Allentown School District

As the fourth largest of 501 districts throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Allentown School District educates approximately 17,521 students in 23 pre-school, elementary, middle and high schools located throughout the City of Allentown, and employs over 2,000 administrators, professionals, staff members and employees. The District has successfully completed a three-year Empowerment Plan. 2002-2003 PSSA scores revealed almost two-thirds of all students exceeds the basic, proficient or advanced PSSA categories. Just under 70% of ASD's students take part in a district-wide free or subsidized lunch program.

31 S. Penn St., P.O. Box 328, Allentown, PA 18105

484-765-4000

www.allentownsd.org

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