



everychild. one voice.®

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 5, 2008



Great Public Schools for Every Child

CONTACTS:

Staci Maiers, NEA
(202) 822-7823, smaiers@nea.org

James Martinez, PTA
(312) 670-6782 x325, jmartinez@pta.org

Nation “Thanks” Teachers in a Huge Way

NEA and PTA Create Nation’s Largest “Teacher Thank-You Card”

WASHINGTON— In a monumental effort to say “thanks” to the nation’s 3.2 million public school teachers and to celebrate National Teacher Day (May 6) and Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4-10), the National Education Association and the Parent Teacher Association are urging individuals nationwide to send thank you notes to their favorite teachers.

The Nation’s Largest Teacher Thank-You Card project was created by NEA and PTA in response to an NEA poll showing that the gift nearly half of all teachers would most like to receive is a simple “thank you.” Several thousands of thank-you notes have been collected from students, parents, celebrities, elected officials and individuals from across the nation. A sampling of those messages includes:

- “Ms. Brown was very special because she was my mentor. She was very helpful to my family and me. She and I became close friends and are good friends. After so many years, we still spend time talking on the phone.” *Patti LaBelle, singer*
- “Mr. Sellereit gave me my first acting job in my school production of *The Jungle Book!*” *Hilary Swank, actress*
- “Mr. Tucker has never forgotten what he has in common with his students...he was a kid once, therefore he will always be able to be heard by his students who feel 100 percent respected and validated by him.” *Wilmer Valderrama, actor*
- “Teachers are often the people who inspire us the most. I know I wouldn't be where I am today without my fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Duncan. She so believed in me, and for the first time, made me embrace the idea of learning. I learned to love learning because of Mrs. Duncan.” *Oprah Winfrey, entrepreneur*

To contribute to the Nation’s Largest Teacher Thank-You Card Project, individuals can visit www.teacherthankyoucard.org and send a free e-card or post a video thank you. Thank-you cards can also be mailed to: The Nation’s Largest Teacher Thank You Card Project, c/o NEA, P.O. Box 66458, Washington, D.C. 20035. The cards collected will become part of a larger-than-life mural measuring approximately 8 feet tall and more than 50 feet wide that will be unveiled for the first time during a high profile event in May 2009.

“This project is about taking the time to say ‘thank you’—two simple words that are not said often enough,” said NEA President Reg Weaver. “On behalf of NEA, I thank teachers for their care and unwavering devotion to America’s students. Teachers spark imagination, cultivate creativity and make dreams become reality.”

Warlene Gary, National PTA Chief Executive Officer, adds, “As a parent and a former teacher, I know firsthand how important teachers are to leading children to promise. PTA Teacher Appreciation Week is designed to remind parents and children across the country to thank teachers for the amazing work they do each and every day! Thank you, thank you, thank you teachers of America!”

The Nation's Largest Teacher Thank-You Card Project carries a simple message: Thank a Teacher. The goal is to create a public tribute that helps to demonstrate gratitude for the hard work and dedication that teachers carry into the classrooms and schools across the nation every day.

About National Teacher Day/Teacher Appreciation Week

NEA celebrates National Teacher Day each year on Tuesday of the first full week of May. The day celebrates the outstanding work and lifelong dedication of teachers nationwide. National Teacher Day came into being through the leadership and persistence of Eleanor Roosevelt. In 1953, she persuaded the 81st Congress to proclaim May 7 that year as National Teacher Day. PTA took Roosevelt's idea and dedicated a whole week to celebrate the accomplishments of educators. PTA's annual Teacher Appreciation Week honors the dedicated men and women who lend their passion and skills to educating children. For more information visit www.nea.org/teacherday and www.pta.org.

About PTA

PTA comprises nearly 6 million parents and other concerned adults devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that prides itself on being a powerful voice for children, a relevant resource for parents, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who is concerned with the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.

Note to Editors: High resolution images and a behind-the-scenes video about the project are available at www.teacherthankyoucard.org. B-roll is available upon request.

###

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing 3.2 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators and students preparing to become teachers.