



# Update

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## **Congratulations 2009 Achievement Award Honorees!**

The 15th annual Overcoming Obstacles Achievement Awards dinner will take place on October 22, 2009 in New York City. Four awards will be presented: Lifetime Achievement, Achievement in Education, the Jack L. Siegal Scholarship Award and the American Heart/American Stroke Association Scholarship Award.

### **Lifetime Achievement**

Catherine R. Kinney, recently retired President and Co-Chief Operating Officer of



the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), will receive the 2009 Lifetime Achievement award. She joins a distinguished list of past Lifetime Achievement honorees who exemplify the Overcoming Obstacles program: Muhammad Ali, John Chalsty, Pete Dawkins, Dan Doctoroff, John Dyson, Peter Grauer, Wayne Huizenga, Al Lerner, and Jack Rowe.

Throughout her 35-year career at the NYSE, Mrs. Kinney rose steadily through the ranks holding management positions in several divisions, including client relationships, regulation, trading floor operations and technology. She last served as Group Executive Vice President of NYSE Euronext in Paris, France and was responsible for overseeing the company's global listing program, marketing, and branding.

Mrs. Kinney serves on the boards of NetSuite Inc., Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Georgetown University and Catholic Charities, and is a member of the Economic Club of New York. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Iona College, completed the Advanced Management Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Business and has received honorary degrees from Georgetown University, Fordham University and Rosemont College.

### **Achievement in Education**

The 2009 Overcoming Obstacles Achievement in Education Award will be presented to the Kansas City, Missouri School District for its use of the Overcoming Obstacles program in a major reform initiative to enhance student success in hundreds of classrooms throughout the district. The Kansas City, Missouri School District is the first school district to receive this award.

The decision to purchase Overcoming Obstacles was teacher-led with the goal of assisting educators to reach their students in a more effective manner. Both teachers and students requested a curriculum and activities that could be used during the Family Advocacy Period to discuss and work on issues that were relevant to the students' lives.



The district's use of the Overcoming Obstacles curriculum is broad. Freshmen teachers focus lessons on character and life skills issues, while those with juniors and seniors spend more time on college and career activities.

The curriculum has given teachers the confidence to initiate discussions on tough issues by providing a script within the lesson plans, as well as a variety of activities to illustrate the objective. During the 2009-10 school year, the Overcoming Obstacles curriculum will be critical to teachers assisting students in setting goals, developing time management and study skills and the habits of success that result in higher achievement. *(continued on next page)*

## Across the Country with Overcoming Obstacles®

Every year, the reach of Overcoming Obstacles spreads faster and farther across the country. Schools and districts already teaching the program expand their use of it and new schools decide to teach Overcoming Obstacles lessons in their middle and high school classrooms.

Today, all over North America, young people in urban, suburban, and rural locations, attending public, private, and parochial schools, and from every economic background, are helped by educators to develop life skills they can use to overcome obstacles that will challenge them in adolescence and adulthood.

During the past year, additional schools in California, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, West Virginia, Wyoming, Canada and the Caribbean, have decided to implement the Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Program.

### Culturally Relevant, Universally Applicable

An important advantage of the Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Program is that it is culturally relevant while being universally applicable. Teachers of all subjects find it easy to infuse life skills into any course.

**Advisories & Overcoming Obstacles:** M.S. 302 in Brooklyn, NY has used a customized Overcoming Obstacles 6th grade advisory since 2005. Based on the extraordinary success of the program, the leadership at M.S. 302 is expanding its advisory into 7th and 8th grades. The new curricula will focus on communication skills, time management, prioritizing, conflict resolution, and bullying prevention.

**Wellness & Overcoming Obstacles:** The John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School (Lavelle Prep), opening its doors this September, will be the first charter school on Staten Island. Lavelle Prep will start with a 6th grade class of approximately 75 students but will eventually serve 450 students each year in grades 6 through 12 as each class advances to the next grade level. It will provide an arts-focused, college-preparatory education primarily to students living with emotional disorders.

The Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Program will be a major component of the school's 6th grade Wellness Curriculum. Focusing on topics such as goal setting, study skills, decision making techniques, and creating positive environments, these skills will help Lavelle Prep students graduate from high school and realize their full potential.

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## Achievement Awards

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Student Achievement Awards will be presented to two young people nominated by their school administration as exemplars of Overcoming Obstacles. Prospective award recipients submit applications and essays in which they describe their experience with the program. The Overcoming Obstacles staff and board select the student honorees.

Last year's student honorees were Samy LaGuerre and Mary Wright. Samy, an eighth grade student at Public School 10 in Brooklyn, NY, was introduced to the Overcoming Obstacles program as part of the Buddy Mentoring program that trains older students to facilitate communication, decision making and goal setting lessons for younger students.

Mary Wright, a recent graduate of Sheepshead Bay High School in Brooklyn, was the first recipient of the American Heart/American Stoke Association scholarship, which in association with the Overcoming Obstacles program, provides assistance to students interested in careers in science and medicine. Mary will attend Old Westbury College at The State University of New York this fall.

## Decision Making Skills Highlighted at Back to School Retreat

The New York City Department of Education's Office for Students in Temporary Housing will host a "Back to School Retreat" for 100 students.

Overcoming Obstacles staff members will facilitate a Decision Making Institute for all 100 students. In this engaging activity, participants must imagine that they are responsible for starting a new society after a cataclysmic event; students will learn and apply steps of decision making and work collaboratively in small groups to solve complex problems. The decision making skills they develop through this activity will provide them with effective strategies for approaching life challenges.

## What's New at Overcoming Obstacles?

**Service Learning Handbook:** guides students and teachers through the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating community service learning projects.

**Back-to-School Orientation Handbook:** 10 activity-based lessons to help students learn about their classmates, build self-esteem, develop personal management skills, and understand the importance of teamwork.

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Our Mission: To ensure that all young people learn the communication, decision making, and goal setting skills they need to be successful in life.



### Overcoming Obstacles

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