



BARBARA DREYER, CONNECTIONS ACADEMY FOUNDER AND CEO WINS 2010 INTERNATIONAL DISTANCE LEARNING AWARD

***-- Honored with Prestigious Award for "Outstanding Leadership by an Individual"
Confirming Connections Academy as a Leader in Distance Learning --***

BALTIMORE, May 5 -- Barbara Dreyer, co-founder, president and CEO of Connections Academy (CA), one of the nation's leading virtual K–12 education providers, has been honored by The United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) with a 2010 International Distance Learning Award for her contributions to the distance learning field. Dreyer's award, for "Outstanding Leadership by an Individual in the Field of Distance Learning" in the Online Technology/PreK–12 category, was announced last night at a gala awards ceremony that kicked off the USDLA's 2010 National Conference in St. Louis, Missouri.

Janae Cardel, an elementary teacher at CA's Pennsylvania school, Commonwealth Connections Academy, was also honored with a USDLA 2010 International Distance Learning/Gold Award for "Best Practices Award for Excellence in Distance Learning Teaching." Ms. Cardel won the accolade for her creative and inventive approach to virtual instruction of first graders, in which she combines sound curricular objectives with engaging and creative delivery – often using singing and puppets in combination with interactive, synchronous live online instruction sessions.

The USDLA's International Distance Learning Awards are the world's most prestigious distance learning awards. Presented annually to individuals like Dreyer and Cardel, and organizations engaged in the development and delivery of distance learning programs, the Awards recognize major accomplishments in distance learning and highlight those distance learning instructors, programs, and professionals who have achieved and demonstrated extraordinary results through the use of online, videoconferencing, satellite and blended learning delivery technologies.

The USDLA International Awards are closely followed by the distance learning industry. "As a premier organization for the entire distance learning profession, we enjoy honoring some of the leaders in the industry," said Dr. John G. Flores, CEO of USDLA. "Each year these winners raise the bar and exceed best practice expectations for the industry as a whole and we are truly honored by their contributions to the distance learning industry."

Dreyer won the 2010 International Distance Learning Award in recognition of her leadership, commitment and vision that have made possible the remarkable growth of the virtual public education field, as well as Connections Academy, one of the nation's leading virtual K–12 education providers. In the eight years since Dreyer first helped to launch CA, the company has grown exponentially, from operating two schools serving 400 K–8 students in the fall of 2002 to a national presence on the virtual K–12 education scene. .Connections Academy will serve approximately 27,000 full-time students during the 2009-10 school year. In 2010–2011 the Connections Academy public school network will span 17 virtual K–12 schools in 16 states, and its nationwide private school, National Connections Academy, will serve students throughout the U.S.

“I am extremely honored by this award and gratefully acknowledge the USDLA and its commitment to furthering virtual education,” commented Barbara Dreyer, President and CEO of Connections Academy. “I proudly share this award with all of the Connections Academy teachers and administrators across the country who have worked to so hard to make a positive impact on their students’ lives.”

While growing CA's school network and student enrollment, Dreyer also has been a driver of important curricular and program enhancements, including: a comprehensive high school program, a national private school, and a supplemental online course offering for “bricks-and-mortar” schools. Despite CA's dramatic growth, student academic achievement has remained consistently high, as measured by standardized test results, school awards and accolades, and parent satisfaction surveys. Dreyer is grateful for the dedication and hard work of the entire CA team, noting, “I'd like to thank everyone in our extended ‘family,’ which today includes not only dozens of educational partners but more than 1,000 CA teachers and other employees, for the work that has led to this award.”

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About Connections Academy

Connections Academy is a leading national provider of high-quality, highly accountable virtual public and private schools in the U.S. for students in grades K–12. Connections Academy schools deliver top quality, personalized education for students that combines certified teachers, a proven curriculum, technology tools, and community experiences to create a supportive and successful environment for children who want an individualized approach to education. In Connections Academy's Personalized Performance Learning® approach, students use daily lesson plans and curriculum materials provided by Connections Academy. Teachers develop a learning plan for each student, whose progress is tracked through a proprietary, web-based Learning Management System. During the 2009–10 school year, Connections Academy served students in Arizona, California (Southern and Central), Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin, and Wyoming through its public school programs. It serves students in all states in the U.S. through the online private school, National Connections Academy. New public school programs will be added in the 2010–11 school year. Connections Academy offers grades K through 12, though some schools do not offer all grades. For more information, call 800-382-6010 or visit www.ConnectionsAcademy.com.

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