

For Immediate Release

Contact: Felice Mancini
Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation
818-762-4328
felice@mhopus.org

**7th ANNUAL MR. HOLLAND'S OPUS FOUNDATION AWARDS
PRESENTED AT CARNEGIE HALL**

Five Music Teachers To Receive Award At Ceremony

NEW YORK -- The Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation will present its 7th annual music teacher awards at Carnegie Hall in New York on April 3. Five music teachers were selected from across the country and will receive \$10,000 each. The award recognizes music teachers who best emulate the personal characteristics and dedication of "Mr. Holland," portrayed by Richard Dreyfuss in the hit 1995 movie.

The awards will be presented during a concert saluting Charles Strouse, performed by the New York Pops and conducted by Martin Yates. The awards are sponsored each year by Guitar Center, Inc.

This year's awards will mark the 12th anniversary of the foundation, founded by composer Michael Kamen, who passed away in 2003. "Michael would be very proud to see his legacy continued through our work. After 12 years, hundreds of thousands of kids have been able to play music as a result of our efforts. But we've only scratched the surface in making sure that all children have access to music education," said Felice Mancini, Executive Director of The Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation and daughter of legendary composer Henry Mancini. "The Pops shares our dedication to this end."

This year's award recipients are:

- Robert Eisenhart, Van Nuys High School, Van Nuys, CA
- Larry Jackson, Allegany High School, Cumberland, MD
- Trea Kimball, Adams-Friendship High School, Friendship, WI
- Cynthia Leiby, WCK Walls Elementary School, Pitman, NJ
- Holly Mullenix, National Teachers Academy, Chicago, IL

-more-

"Teachers like these provide inspiration to our children," said Marty Albertson, CEO of Guitar Center. "Their unselfish dedication needs to be recognized and rewarded, and we need to encourage others to follow in their footsteps to help shape the future of our society."

Criteria for the selection of the teachers includes:

- Instill a love of music in their students through instrumental music instruction in grades K-12
- Have the passion, dedication and leadership skills to persevere under difficult circumstances
- Give generously of their time, energy and talent, exceeding what is expected of music educators
- Demonstrate creativity regardless of availability of instruments, materials, classroom space and budget limitations
- Inspire students and challenge them to attain the highest level of musicianship
- Encourage musical growth through ongoing individual and group performance, auditions and evaluations

The Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation donates new and refurbished musical instruments to underserved schools, community music programs and individual students nationwide, in an effort to give youngsters the many benefits of music education, help them to be better students and inspire creativity and expression through playing music. To date, new and refurbished instruments with a value of \$5 million have been donated to over 850 school and community music programs across the country. More information can be found at www.mhopus.org.

#

Robert Eisenhart, Van Nuys High School, Van Nuys, CA
Larry Jackson, Allegany High School, Cumberland, MD
Trea Kimball, Adams-Friendship High School, Friendship, WI
Cynthia Leiby, WCK Walls Elementary School, Pitman, NJ
Holly Mullenix, National Teachers Academy, Chicago, IL