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NEVADA EDUCATOR WINS THE JASON PROJECT’S PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL TEACHING AWARD

Ashburn, Va. – Pam Locascio, a fifth-grade teacher at Roger Gehring Elementary School in Las Vegas, has won The JASON Project’s 2011 Hilda E. Taylor Award as national educator of the year.

Named for the veteran JASON educator who died on September 11, 2001 aboard the American Airlines flight that crashed into the Pentagon, the award recognizes an outstanding classroom teacher who has had a positive impact on his or her students, school, and community through exemplary teaching and implementation of JASON’s standards-based science curricula.

“For the past 21 years, Pam Locascio has been a dedicated and enthusiastic teacher, role model, and transforming influence on her colleagues and her students,” said Dr. Eleanor Smalley, JASON’s Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. “She is richly deserving and we are honored to recognize her.”

In addition to classroom teaching, Locascio is a Clark County School District “GATE specialist” who helps general education teachers enrich and enhance their instruction. She has participated in JASON’s award-winning science program since 1999. Nearly 3,000 Clark County students and 300 teachers are registered to use JASON’s free online curricula.

"JASON curricula offers everything my gifted fifth-graders need in both content and challenge, and the kids love learning with it!” Locascio said.

The JASON Project, named for the mythological Greek explorer, links students inside and outside the classroom to real science and scientists. For grades 4-10, JASON develops hands-on, inquiry-based curricula, and professional development for their teachers. JASON’s Immersion Learning delivers academic enrichment programs to youth in after-school settings, mentoring and summer camps offered in collaboration with Boys & Girls Clubs, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Air Force, Ripken Foundation, as well as museums and aquariums throughout the world.

JASON curricula have garnered national recognition for their ability to inspire and educate students, including 2010 and 2009 Distinguished Achievement Award from the Association of Educational Publishers; 2010 and 2009 Award of Excellence from Tech & Learning magazine; and 2011, 2010, 2009, and 2008 awards for Best Science Instructional Solution, Best K-12 Instructional Solution, Best Online Instructional Solution, and Best Education Game or Simulation from the Software & Information Industry Association.

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Multiple independent evaluations across the country show that JASON and Immersion:

- Increase student achievement in STEM disciplines
- Provide at-risk youth with pathways to academic success and a reason to stay in school
- Make it possible for non-science teachers to teach science effectively

JASON reaches 1.5 million students a year, and general audiences of over six million through content distributed by partner organizations. Its programs are used in every U.S. state, and internationally including Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, and the United Kingdom.

The award’s namesake, Taylor, was a native of Sierra Leone who taught in Washington D.C. public schools for 16 years while implementing JASON in her classrooms, and training her colleagues to use the program with their students.

About The JASON Project
The JASON Project has reached more than 11 million students and teachers since its founding in 1989 by Dr. Robert Ballard, the oceanographer and explorer best known for discovering RMS Titanic. JASON is a nonprofit organization operated in partnership with National Geographic Society, Sea Research Foundation, Inc., and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

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