

WEAC: Wisconsin's Hmong Language and Culture Enrichment Program to receive NEA's highest and most prestigious award

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Virtual 2021 NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards to take place on Tuesday, June 29

MILWAUKEE — The National Education Association and Wisconsin Education Association Council will recognize Madison's Hmong Language and Culture Enrichment Program with an NEA Human and Civil Rights Award during a virtual ceremony at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 29. The Human and Civil Rights awards are the most prestigious honors the National Education Association bestows.

The theme of this year's 2021 NEA HCR Awards ceremony is "[Out of Struggle Comes Progress](#): Grounded in our History; Igniting our Future—and will include the first-ever award to recognize outstanding leadership in Native American communities." The HLCEP will receive the Ellison S. Onizuka Memorial Award.

"In the middle of a global pandemic, an economic crisis, and racial and social

upheaval, across race and space, native and newcomer, in schools and neighborhoods across America, there are unsung heroes who continually bend the arc of the moral universe more closely towards justice every day,” said NEA President Becky Pringle. “No matter what we look like or where we come from, they hold politicians accountable for their actions, call out efforts to divide us, and rewrite the rules so the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share. They help us come together around shared challenges and develop collective solutions to ensure our schools, neighborhoods, and communities are strong, healthy, and safe. These champions of noble actions and righteous causes are inspirational examples of the courage enshrined in the NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards.”

The Hmong Language and Culture Enrichment Program ([HLCEP](#)) started when a few Hmong parents in Madison learned that the lack of cultural support at schools and low self-esteem were key barriers to their children’s academic success. Established in 2013, the program gives flight to the dreams of diverse Asian communities, powered by education and pride in their identity. HLCEP received national recognition from the Center for Resilient Cities for being one of only two programs in the United States working to increase students’ Hmong language skills and appreciation for their culture. To learn more about HLCEP, click [here](#).

“The Wisconsin Education Association Council advocates for great public education for the common good, and we celebrate the work of those who advance our mission,” said WEAC President Ron Martin. “Educators in partnership with organizations such as the Hmong Language and Culture Enrichment Program work to create caring and responsible citizens of a global society.”

About the NEA HCR Awards

The merger of the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Teachers Association (ATA) in 1966 produced the annual NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards. ATA, which represented Black teachers in segregated schools, traditionally honored leaders in the justice and civil rights movement annually. Since the merger, NEA has recognized and honored educators, individuals, community partners, and organizations that are advancing the mantle for human and civil rights.

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