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## **Nine Teachers win Great American Classroom Makeover Prizes**

*Annual national contest awards deserving teachers with means to update classrooms and supplies*

CINCINNATI – Dec. 14, 2009 – Great American Financial Resources®, Inc., a member of the Great American Insurance Group family of companies, has announced the winners of The Great American Classroom Makeover. The national contest gives educators across the country the opportunity to nominate their classrooms to receive up to \$2,500 to purchase needed items or upgrade their rooms.

“A report from the National School Supply and Equipment Association shows that teachers are spending nearly \$1.9 billion out of pocket each year on classroom supplies,” says Mathew T. Dutkiewicz, GAFRI executive vice president. “As an American company serving America’s educators, it’s important for us to do what we can to help alleviate some of that burden.”

In addition to a cash award for classroom updates and supplies, winning teachers will receive a one-year subscription to the Great American Teachers’ Club (a membership-based resource site through the Ron Clark Academy).

Grand prize winners were selected from hundreds of nationwide entries. The following winners will receive \$2,500 for their classrooms:

- **Melisha Alarcon, Burleson Early Childhood Center Head Start, San Antonio, Texas**  
In Alarcon’s Head Start room, she is not able to ask families for supplies. This classroom makeover will be her opportunity to secure some basic needs for her room, including updating teaching tools, repairing broken fixtures and getting some large visuals to enhance learning.
- **Kelly Burichin, Charles T. Young Elementary, Cleves, Ohio**  
Due to school consolidation within the district, Burichin is now teaching art in the corner of the L-shaped cafeteria. A classroom makeover will allow them to improve their classroom environment with the addition of walls and a door, giving students a quiet space to let creativity flow.
- **Joe Kasper, Union Avenue Middle School, Irvington, N.J.**  
Because the classroom projector currently can’t be used on sunny days due to a lack of window coverings, Kasper plans to install window blinds, new carpeting and a SMART board to help his inner-city students’ learning environment.
- **Miranda Randall, Charles B. Aycock High School, Pikeville, N.C.**  
A second-year teacher, Randall wants to update science equipment from the 1960s as well as provide additional seating for her rapidly growing class.
- **Deborah Swan, Windsor Hills, Los Angeles, Calif.**  
With few resources at her magnet school, Swan plans to update the 60-year-old chairs in her classroom.

Additionally, four honorable mentions were selected and will receive \$1,000 cash awards for classroom needs:

- Meloni DiPietro, Seton-La Salle High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- David Hubbell, Dorothy Thomas Special Day School, Tampa, Fla.
- Amy Olson, Lostant Elementary School, Lostant, Ill.
- Alecia White Scharback, Rock Island Primary Academy, Rock Island, Ill.

Great American Financial Resources representatives will be visiting the winning teachers throughout the month of January to present the awards. For more information on the winners, visit [www.TeachersDeserveTheBest.com](http://www.TeachersDeserveTheBest.com).

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**About Great American Financial Resources:**

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