School's RealeBook Project Recognized for Use of Technology to Promote Family Literacy

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WASHINGTON – Bureau of Indian Education Director Thomas M. Dowd today announced that the Enemy Swim Day School, a BIE funded K8 school in Waubay, S.D., is one of four non- profit organizations named by the Verizon Foundation last month as the first winners of its Verizon Tech Savvy Award. Enemy Swim, operated by the Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe of the Lake Traverse Reservation in South Dakota, was among a national field of 85 nominees.

"I want to congratulate Enemy Swim Day School and its FACE Program for being among the winners of the first Verizon Tech Savvy Award," Dowd said. "The Enemy Swim FACE Program's RealeBook Project is bringing new hope to parents that their children will have the reading skills necessary to sustain them for the future."

The school received the award for its RealeBook Project, an initiative of the Enemy Swim Family and Child Education (FACE) Program, which was recognized by the foundation as an exemplary program for increasing technology skills among tribal parents by teaching them to write and publish children's books using computers, software, digital cameras and printers while learning organizing, writing, editing and publishing skills. Parents then read the books they produce, which are written both in English and Dakotah, the tribe's native language, to their children. The project, which produces four original books per month, supports the school's focus on teaching the Dakotah language while promoting literacy, employment training, and cultural pride through the FACE program.

In addition to being named a 2006 award winner, the Enemy Swim Day School FACE Program received $25,000 to continue and expand their RealeBook Project.

FACE and its companion program Baby FACE are projects of the National Council for Family Literacy (NCFL), a national nonprofit organization established in 1989 to meet the educational needs of parents and their children through family literacy programs. Both are administered by BIE to provide early childhood education and pre-literacy experiences for infants and families in the home as well as early childhood and adult education programs in school. An important facet of these programs is support of parental involvement in a child's reading experience. Since its start in 1991, the FACE program has served over 15,000 infants, children and adults. In addition, it has enabled over 500 adults to earn high school or general equivalency diplomas (GEDs) and approximately 2,000 adults to find employment.

RealeBooks (pronounced REALLYbooks) is a web-based application that can be used by children and adults to create their own "books" with text and photos which then can be posted to the RealeBooks website. Books created by other BIE funded schools can be found on the website's Bureau of Indian Education Reale Library page at http://bie.realelibrary.com/. In school year 20062007, the BIE awarded RealeBook Projects to nine FACE programs. They have since produced 1,840 books reaching 460

families.

The Verizon Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Verizon Communications. According to its website, the foundation funds programs that address social issues such as literacy, technology education and domestic violence, and builds partnerships to replicate its most successful programs in communities across the country. The Verizon Tech Savvy Award is part of the foundation's Verizon Literacy Network, a free, online resource that leverages technology to deliver training and information to improve literacy.

The BIE school system serves almost 50,000 American Indian children in 184 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools located on or near 63 reservations in 23 states. In school year 2006-2007, the BIE directly operated one-third of these schools and the remaining two thirds were tribally operated under BIE contracts or grants. For more information about NCFL, its projects and partners, visit www.famlit.org. To learn more about the Verizon Literacy Network and the 2006 Verizon Tech Savvy Awards, visit http://literacynetwork.verizon.org/.
