# Ft. Wingate Elementary FACE Teacher One of Two New Mexico Winners

**Media Contact:** Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
**For Immediate Release:** October 18, 2002
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**WASHINGTON** – Charlotte P. Begay, the adult education coordinator with the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) Wingate Elementary School's Family and Child Education Program (FACE) in Ft. Wingate, N.M., was honored yesterday as one of the state's two winners of the Milken National Educator Award. She and Suzanne Harper, principal of Colinas Del Norte Elementary School in Rio Rancho, received their $25,000 awards at surprise notification ceremonies at their respective schools. Each can use their award in any way they choose.

"As a recipient of the prestigious Milken National Educator Award, Charlotte Begay has brought honor and pride to her family, school and community," said Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Neal McCaleb. "This award represents a high standard for all BIA educators, who I know join with me in congratulating Ms. Begay on her achievement."

Begay and Harper will receive all-expenses-paid trips to Los Angeles in June 2003 to participate in the annual Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference. They will also become part of the Milken Educator Network, a coalition of over 1,800 educators who have access to a variety of professional resources to help cultivate and expand innovative programs in their classrooms, schools and districts.

The Milken National Educator Award, which has been called the "Oscars of Teaching" by Teacher Magazine, was created in 1985 by education pioneer Lowell Milken, chairman and founder of the Milken Family Foundation. The award was established to celebrate the efforts of some of the nation's most outstanding teachers, principals and specialists in K-12 education.

Recipients of the awards are recommended to the Milken Family Foundation by an independent blue ribbon panel, appointed by each state's department of education. Predetermined criteria for the award include exceptional educational talent as evidenced by outstanding instructional practices in the classroom, school and profession; outstanding accomplishment; strong long range potential for professional and policy leadership and an engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community.

New Mexico State Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael J. Davis and Christopher Cain, senior vice president, operations and general counsel for the Milken Family Foundation, presented the awards. "Charlotte takes an innovative approach to learning. She meets with parents, grandparents, aunts and others to involve them in students' lives and learning," Davis said.

**Note to editors**: A photograph of Charlotte Begay may be viewed via the Interior Department's website at www.doi.gov.