

TOWN TALK

Economics Teachers Recognized

Two area teachers are among 12 Arkansas teachers recognized Nov. 8 with

the Bessie B. Moore Award for outstanding teaching about economics — Jennifer Howald of Woods Elementary School, Fort Smith School District, and Valerie Harp of Hartford Elementary School, Hartford School district.

According to a news release from the event's host, nonprofit educational association Economics Arkansas, former U.S. Department of Education Deputy Secretary Ray Simon



Howald



Harp

presented the awards at a luncheon at the Clinton Presidential Center at Little Rock.

Harp received a plaque and \$1,000 for her project, Economics is a Work of Art, in which second-graders started their own cupcake factory business and sold their edible works of art. On their first business day, 25 dozen cupcakes sold within 15 minutes, so the students had to deal with real-world issues including food safety, supply and demand, and marketing.

Harp's project was inspired by Van Gogh's "Starry Night" painting and guided by a Walmart bakery specialist.

Howald received a plaque and \$1,000 for her project, $E + E = E^2$. Using a children's book as a springboard, 28 fourth-grade students started their own business, the Sweets-N-Sours Howald Shop. Each student applied for a position in a department of the business.

The business department secured a loan, the advertising department produced a skit and song to create a demand for the product. The baking department manned the mixing bowls. The design department applied the finishing touches, and the packaging department addressed marketplace appeal. At the end of the 2011-12 school year, the class presented their \$550 in profits to the Ronald McDonald Family Room.

Simon said teachers are in a unique position to teach financial literacy as the "cookie jar of the 21st century."

"If teachers were securities, they would be considered high investment-grade bonds or growth stocks with high value because they are able to develop financially literate students while supporting effective teaching while stimulating economic growth," Simon said.

— TIMES RECORD STAFF