

# FUND FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK SLOAN AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

# 2011 WINNERS



## MARISSA BELLINO —

*Environment Seminar, Global Environment, Environmental Science Research  
High School for Environmental Studies (HSES)*

Ms. Bellino fell in love with biology in college; her first job was in environmental restoration. While in a master's program in environmental remote sensing, she decided to become a teacher. At HSES, Ms. Bellino and her students are recognized for the rigor and sophistication of their research and environmental field studies. She has created projects for her students with the Nature Conservancy, Cold Spring Harbor DNA Lab, National Geological Survey and the NYC Parks Department, among others. For three consecutive years, helped by the Toshiba Foundation, Ms. Bellino has taken six students to Japan to work on energy sustainability. A colleague says, "I wish all teachers were like Marissa Bellino because it really would be a very different world."

## ELIZA M. KUBERSKA —

*Algebra II/Geometry, AP Statistics, Problem Solving  
Hunter College High School*

Born in Poland, Ms. Kuberska came to New York as a teenager and graduated with a joint degree in math and physics from the University of Chicago. She started her teaching career in the Bronx, received a MA in Math from NYU and then went to Hunter H.S., where she has taught for nine years. At Hunter, she is recognized as an accomplished and popular teacher. In addition to her energy, humor and helpfulness, Ms. Kuberska, according to a colleague, "...offers students the joy of doing mathematics and the exuberance of taking risks." For Ms. Kuberska, "Teaching for me can never be a routine. It is a constant learning process."



## MARIA CHERYL R. DIANGCO —

*AP Biology, Science Research  
Sheepshead Bay High School*

In the seven years since she was recruited to Sheepshead Bay H.S. from the Philippines, Ms. Diangco, who has a BA and MA in Biology, has built an award-winning science research program from the ground up at a school better known for its football. Her students place in the top ranks of national science competitions. She is now coordinating a Science Research Academy that will offer students four years of high school science. Many of her former students are majoring in biology, neuroscience or headed toward medicine in college. As a recent graduate explained, "She was contacting me even after I graduated, advising me on what courses to take. She felt like a mother to every single student in the class. I love her."



## JIM COCOROS —

*Honors Pre-Calculus, Calculus BC, Math Team  
Stuyvesant High School*

In 1999, Mr. Cocoros, a lawyer, decided to become a math teacher, starting as a remedial algebra teacher at Sheepshead Bay H.S. Recruited to Stuyvesant H.S. in 2004, he now leads both the Stuyvesant and Citywide NYC Math Team. Mr. Cocoros tracks each student's achievements, allowing him to calibrate the speed and level of each lesson and ensure that each student is keeping up. He advises them about college and writes letters of recommendation, which are famous at admissions offices. A colleague says, "His kids come in with a gift and he unwraps it. He instills a joy of learning. The only comparable teacher at Stuyvesant has been Frank McCourt."



## KATE BELIN —

*Geometry, Functions  
Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School*

Intending to major in photography at Bard, Ms. Belin instead gravitated to her real passion—mathematics. A teacher at Fannie Lou Hamer H.S. since 2005, she is already recognized as an expert math teacher, called upon by Math for America and the Algebra Project to mentor other teachers. Her students arrive from middle school without knowing multiplication tables and end up executing geometrical proofs. According to Principal Nancy Mann, "Kate's strength is her ability to discover what students think. She teaches mathematical concepts, and to do that she first grasps what sense the students make of those concepts. She's the real deal—she's going to be a force in mathematics."



## MARGARET DESIMONE —

*Living Environment (and Lab), Anatomy and Physiology  
Midwood High School*

It was in a chemistry class at Brooklyn College taught by Volcheck Fried, a holocaust survivor, that Ms. DeSimone discovered a love of teaching and science. A teacher at Midwood H.S. for over 22 years, she has inspired countless students to pursue careers in medicine or science. She excels at teaching all students. According to a colleague, "It's not hard to teach gifted or average students. Ms. DeSimone is the master at reaching those who are not interested or prepared." A fellow science teacher says that after students complete Ms. DeSimone's class, "They are hungry for more science. They're highly trained and demand exciting teaching."



## ALIA JACKSON —

*Physics (including IB Physics), Earth Science  
Curtis High School*

Encouraged by her astronomy professor at SUNY Plattsburgh to pursue a Ph.D., Ms. Jackson, instead, earned a M.Ed., because she loved the energy of teaching. Now in her sixth year at Curtis H.S., Ms. Jackson played a key role in creating its International Baccalaureate (IB) program and currently teaches its two-year IB physics courses. During the summer she works under astrophysicist Daniel Wolf-Savin at Columbia University, which has contributed a state-of-the-art telescope and camera for the popular Astronomy Club she created. Called a spectacular teacher and colleague, Ms. Jackson reflects, "I love physics and I love teaching it. Every day I teach, I hope I have changed how my students think about science and its value to them."



# SELECTION PANEL

**Sheldon Weinbaum, PhD, Engineering**  
*Chair Of The Selection Panel*  
CUNY Distinguished Professor of Biomedical and Mechanical Engineering  
The City College of New York

**Jill Bargonetti-Chavarria, PhD, Biology**  
Professor of Biological Sciences, Hunter College

**Derrick Brazill, PhD, Biology**  
Associate Professor of Biology, Hunter College

**James Covington**  
Executive Vice President, Private Banking, Capital One Bank

**John Ewing, PhD, Mathematics**  
President, Math for America

**Ira Flatow, Science Journalist**  
Host, NPR's Science Friday;  
Founder and President, Talking Science

**Alan Friedman, PhD, Physics**  
Consultant, Museum Development and Science Communication  
Former Director and CEO, New York Hall of Science

**Gregory Gunn, Electrical Engineering**  
Entrepreneur in Residence, City Light Capital

**Margaret Honey, PhD, Developmental Psychology**  
President and CEO, New York Hall of Science

**Vikram Kapila, PhD, Mechanical Engineering**  
Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering,  
Polytechnic Institute of New York University

**Rosamond Kinzler, PhD, Experimental Petrology**  
Senior Director, National Center for Science Literacy,  
Education and Technology, American Museum of Natural History

**Michael J. O'Neill, Journalist and Author**  
Former Editor, NY Daily News

**Ruth Stark, PhD, Chemistry**  
Director, CUNY Institute for Macromolecular Assemblies  
Distinguished Professor and Member of CUNY Doctoral Faculty  
Professor of Chemistry, The City College of New York

**Lev Sviridov, PhD, Inorganic Chemistry**  
Research Associate, CUNY Energy Institute  
The City College of New York

**Maribel Vazquez, ScD, Biomedical Engineering**  
Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering,  
The City College of New York

## ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation is a philanthropic nonprofit institution established by Alfred P. Sloan, Jr. in 1934. Its main programs involve science and technology, standard of living and economic performance, education and careers in science and technology, selected national issues and a civic program. The goal of the civic program is to contribute to New York City by responding to special opportunities the city presents, and by funding high-leverage programs related to its areas of interest. The Sloan Public Service Awards, presented annually by the Fund for the City of New York, have been part of its civic program since 1985.

## FUND FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

The Fund for the City of New York was established by the Ford Foundation in 1968 with the mandate to improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers. In partnership with government agencies, nonprofit institutions and foundations, the Fund has developed and helped implement innovations in policy, programs, practices and technology in order to advance the functioning of government and nonprofit organizations in New York City and beyond. The Fund seeks out and adapts ways to enable government and non-profit agencies to achieve excellence through five core programs – the Cash Flow Loans Program, the Incubator/Partner Program, Sloan Public Service Awards, Sloan Awards for Excellence in Teaching Science and Mathematics and Technology Development and Assistance – and three strategic initiatives: the Center on Government Performance, the Center for Internet Innovation/E-Community Connect and the Cultural Enterprise Suite.

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Mary McCormick, President

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# 2011

## THE AWARD

The Fund for the City of New York and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation launched the Sloan Awards for Excellence in Teaching Science and Mathematics in New York City high schools in the fall of 2009. These awards recognize exemplary science and mathematics teachers who achieve superb results, are leaders for academic excellence within their schools and inspire their students to pursue careers in science and mathematics.

Seven awards are bestowed each year to teachers in New York City high schools. Each teacher receives \$5,000 and \$2,500 is given to each winner's school to strengthen its science or mathematics program.

Nominations are welcome from principals, supervisors, colleagues, students, former students, parents and others who are familiar with the teacher's work. Any science or mathematics teacher who has taught in one of New York City's 422 public high schools for at least five years may be nominated. The on-line nominations form is at [www.fcny.org/core/sae](http://www.fcny.org/core/sae). Nominations are accepted throughout the year.

The winners are chosen by an independent panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians and educators.

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