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**Outreach Scholarship Community Partnership Award  
honors Dr. Janet Swenson and Red Cedar Writing Project**

Contact: Carla Hills, University Outreach and Engagement:  
(517) 353-8977, hillsc@msu.edu

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EAST LANSING, Mich. - While emerging communication technologies have caused rapid changes in recent years, Janet Swenson knows that effective learning depends on graphic images as well as the written word.

Since 1993 Swenson has directed the Red Cedar Writing Project (RCWP), an educational outreach program and professional development network that serves teachers of writing at all grade levels. RCWP is also MSU's site of the National Writing Project, which aims to improve student achievement across the United States by improving the teaching of writing and improving learning.

The university-wide **Outreach Scholarship Community Partnership Award** was bestowed on Swenson and the Red Cedar Writing Project by President Lou Anna K. Simon at the Awards Convocation on Tuesday, February 3, 2009. Swenson is associate professor in Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures, and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education in the College of Arts and Letters.



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OUTREACH  
& ENGAGEMENT**

Michigan State University  
Kellogg Center, Garden Level  
East Lansing, MI  
48824-1022

517/353-8977  
fax: 517/432-9541

email: outreach@msu.edu  
http://outreach.msu.edu

RCWP co-directors Toby Loftus, retired Detroit middle school teacher; Mitch Nobis, North Farmington High School teacher; Renee Webster, Perry Elementary School teacher; Troy Hicks, Central Michigan University assistant professor; and Andrea Zellner, former Southfield-Lathrup High School teacher share in recognition for the award.

In the nomination, Swenson's leadership and scholarship were noted for development of new ways to analyze and improve the teaching of writing; identification of "transformative teacher networks" that begins with individual teacher's knowledge and practice and promotes a process that transfers new understandings for teachers and, ultimately, their students; and, approaches for writing in digital environments for teachers confronting rapid technology changes.

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“Engaging teachers of writing in their own professional development is a rewarding experience,” Swenson said. “We have a vibrant, enthusiastic team and we continually challenge each other to determine the most effective methods of teaching writing. We strive to identify what professional preparation best equips teachers to facilitate the continual development of writers. It is an honor to share the award with colleagues who are dedicated writers and teachers of writing.”

During the past 16 years Swenson and RCWP’s efforts have focused on improving the teaching of communication, in both written and visual forms.

“What sets RCWP apart is their willingness to meet the needs of local schools within local contexts, and the results of RCWP’s research, scholarship, and service have had a significant impact on our teachers’ teaching as well as our students’ writing,” said Sue Stephens, coordinator of curriculum and instruction for the Shiawassee County Regional Education Service District.

Swenson’s enthusiasm has resulted in the development of a wide array of RCWP auxiliary projects, facilitating more than 100 programs for teachers, students, and community members annually. Among them:

***Spartan Writing Camp***, which attracts more than 300 elementary school students each summer;

***Dine and Discuss Book Club***, where local teachers gather socially to discuss professional visits;

***Teachers as Writers***, a peer response group meeting for teachers who wish to continue developing as writers; and,

***Greenrock***, a residential writers’ camp for high school students.

In 2007, RCWP planned, developed, delivered, assessed and revised 113 programs that served approximately 1,900 participants.

Ken Winter, former editor and publisher of the Petoskey News-Review and a current political science and journalism adjunct instructor at North Central Michigan College, said, “The Red Cedar Writing Project has brought a new and higher professional level of lifelong learning to northern Michigan that otherwise would not exist.”

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As so many teachers, students, parents, and employers know, computers and high-tech devices have produced tectonic shifts in the way we communicate. Swenson's work analyzing the influence of emerging technologies on teaching and related public policy concerns has been presented in a keynote address to educators from 46 countries, and published in several journals, including a special edition of English Education.

The Red Cedar Writing Project has received funds and support from a variety of sources, including the U.S. Department of Education, the Michigan Department of Education, Carnegie Foundation, DeWitt Wallace Readers Digest, and local school districts.

To learn more, visit the [Red Cedar Writing Project Web site](#).

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MSU's Outreach Scholarship Community Partnership Award is bestowed annually and provides University-wide recognition of highly engaged community-based research collaborations that positively impact both the community and the scholarship of MSU faculty work.

Learn more about current and past recipients of the [Outreach Scholarship Community Partnership Award](#).

Michigan State University has been advancing knowledge and transforming lives through innovative teaching, research and outreach for more than 150 years. MSU is known internationally as a major public university with global reach and extraordinary impact. Its 17 degree-granting colleges attract scholars worldwide who are interested in combining education with practical problem solving.