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**Jean Karschnia, Valley Crossing Community School Teacher, to Receive *Thrivent Financial Foundation Personal Finance Educator Award* on October 29, 2008**

*September 15, St. Paul, Minn.* – The Minnesota Council on Economic Education will honor Ms. Jean Karschnia at its annual *EconFest* celebration on October 29, 2008, at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis. Ms. Karschnia will receive the *Thrivent Personal Finance Award* which recognizes educators who are increasing student understanding of personal finance through original learning activities at the elementary and secondary levels. Winning entries were chosen based on innovation of approach, emphasis on personal finance concepts, ease of replication, and assessment of student learning.

Karschnia combined economics with children’s literature for her fourth through sixth graders at Valley Crossing Community School. Using the book *Uncle Jed’s Barbershop*, by Margaree King, Karschnia’s lesson helps students identify their own financial goals and create action plans to achieve those goals. The lesson also helped students understand the importance of saving money in order to reach financial goals.

“One of the most effective ways to increase student understanding of economic principles is to make economics and personal financial decision-making skills come alive in the classroom,” said Minnesota Council Executive Director Claudia Parliament. “Every year, hundreds of Minnesota educators are doing just that. We look forward to recognizing their achievements and the outstanding work of Ms. Karschnia and other award winners at our event on October 29.”

The Minnesota Council on Economic Education is a 47-year-old partnership of business, labor and education dedicated to improving economic and personal finance understanding and preparing K-12 students to participate in a complex, global economy. This marks the third year Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has been sponsoring the Awards Program.

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