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YVONNE C. REED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL RECOGNIZED BY FLORIDA AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENCE OF SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM

ORLANDO, Fla., Jan. 18, 2005 – The Yvonne C. Reed Christian School in St. Petersburg earned an award from the Florida African American Education Alliance for its outstanding school choice program yesterday. The school's founder, principal and kindergarten teacher Yvonne Reed-Clayton accepted the award for providing educational opportunities to children on Corporate Tax Credit and McKay scholarships.

The Yvonne C. Reed Christian School operates on a campus shared with Hope of Glory United Methodist Church on St. Petersburg's south side. The school serves children in kindergarten through fifth grades, with a curriculum that focuses on a quality early education, character building and spiritual growth. Students benefit from small classes and individual attention to both accomplishments and challenges.

Reed-Clayton began leading small community schools when most professionals would begin retirement. After 34 years as a public school teacher in Pinellas County, Clayton felt called to respond to the needs of her community. "I planned to work until my 35th anniversary of teaching in public schools. But, on the Monday after Easter in 1996, my pastor approached me about opening a school. There was a real need in the community. The next day, I put in my resignation."

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The first community school Reed-Clayton led taught eight students, including one troubled boy whose tuition she paid for two years. In 1998, Reed-Clayton founded her own school, where she can be found today, with a classroom full of kindergarteners gathered around her.

Reed-Clayton, a Pinellas County native, graduated from Gibbs High School before attending Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, where she earned a bachelor's and master's degree in educational specialties. Along with her public school teaching duties, she was an adjunct professor at Nova Southeastern University and a public school administrator. She has one daughter and hopes to eventually turn leadership of the school over to a family member.

She said, "There is a need for a middle school now; students leave here and we have to recommend another school for them. The community wants this sort of school, they ask for it. If we grow, maybe I can just teach kindergarten. They always say, 'We send them to your school, Yvonne, because you prepare them the right way.' These students need a proper foundation; we give them the basics."

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Photo and Caption on following page.



Yvonne Reed-Clayton (second from right) is congratulated by AAEA members, former Tampa Bay Buccaneer Shaun King and Gov. Jeb Bush.