



## PRESS RELEASE

Windsor, Conn., Aug. 20, 2013

### **CINCINNATI EDUCATOR RECEIVES \$2,000 ING UNSUNG HEROES GRANT FOR AWARD-WINNING TEACHING PROGRAM**

*The ING Unsung Heroes® Program Has Given More Than \$4 Million to Help the Nation's Educators Turn Great Teaching Ideas into Reality for Students*

For the past 17 years, the [ING Unsung Heroes®](#) program has honored educators across the country who work tirelessly – and often without much recognition – to make a lifelong impact in the classroom for their students. Winning programs over the years have provided outstanding educators the opportunity to bring to life their innovative and engaging teaching methods and ideas for their students. Many teachers develop new educational methods and creative programs, but run up against the wall of limited funding. Through the ING Unsung Heroes program, [ING U.S.](#) has recognized and helped fund these great ideas for nearly 20 years, ultimately helping to improve learning for America's K-12 students.

One of the winning programs in the 2013 ING Unsung Heroes competition was submitted by Andrea Baker, a music teacher at Mount Airy School in Cincinnati. She is going back to school with a \$2,000 ING Unsung Heroes grant. By receiving the ING Unsung Heroes award, Baker is recognized as one of the nation's most innovative educators. She is one of only 100 winners across the country who is receiving a \$2,000 award to help fund "The Piano Lab", her creative idea and bring it to life. She will now compete with other winners for one of the top three prizes — an additional \$5,000, \$10,000 or \$25,000 from ING U.S.

"The Piano Lab", Baker's innovative teaching idea, will promote playing the piano among the students in grades two through six under the direction of the music teacher. Although the students currently learn how to play percussion, strings and woodwind instruments they have not, up until this project, been able to learn the piano. Through learning to play the piano, students will improve their self-discipline and stimulate their minds. It can also lead to reducing stress that is involved with school and help them express their emotions. Coordination, fine motor skills, memory, vocabulary, and speech also will be enhanced, along with being exposed to different styles of music as they learn to play. This project gives the students a hands-on

opportunity to apply their theory skills from general music class to an instrument other than those taught in band or strings. Baker, who lives in Cincinnati, hopes her program also will help increase student self-esteem and instill a sense of accomplishment.

“ING U.S. is honored to salute these outstanding teachers for their innovative ideas and dedication to America’s youth,” said Jamie Ohl, president of Tax-Exempt Markets for ING U.S. Retirement Solutions. “Each day, we help individuals prepare for a secure financial future, and we are proud to help these men and women who prepare students for their future. With this grant Andrea Baker is receiving through our ING Unsung Heroes program, her project can continue making an impact on the children she serves.”

ING U.S., a leading provider of retirement plans and programs for teachers, began the ING Unsung Heroes program in 1996 to demonstrate the company’s commitment to the education community. Over the years, the program has awarded more than \$4 million to 1,800 kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup>- grade educators for their innovative teaching methods, creative educational projects, and ability to positively influence the children they teach.

The 2013 ING Unsung Heroes winners were selected from a group of nearly 1,300 applications. To learn more about this year’s winning projects, as well as those from previous years, visit the [ING Unsung Heroes website \(unsungheroes.com\)](http://www.ing.com/unsungheroes). More information about the program can also be found on the [ING Unsung Heroes Facebook page \(facebook.com/unsungheroesgrant\)](https://www.facebook.com/unsungheroesgrant) where people can *like* and share the page to encourage more educators to apply. Applications for the 2014 ING Unsung Heroes awards are currently being accepted through the website.

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**Media inquiries:**

Phil Margolis  
ING U.S.  
Office: 860-580-2676  
Cell: 860-805-7642  
[Phil.Margolis@us.ing.com](mailto:Phil.Margolis@us.ing.com)

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