

Northley Middle School Recognized for Tolerance Efforts

The Southern Poverty Law Center's Teaching Tolerance program has named Northley Middle School as a Mix It Up Model School for its exemplary efforts to foster respect and understanding among its students and throughout its campus during the 2010-11 school year.

Northley Middle School is one of 52 schools from across the country to receive the honor. "We are delighted to recognize Northley Middle School," said Teaching Tolerance Director Maureen Costello. "Mix It Up Model Schools have found innovative ways to create a school environment where respect and inclusiveness are core values. They serve as examples for other schools hoping to instill these values in their students, faculty and staff."

The 2011 National Mix It Up at Lunch Day - which marks the 10th anniversary of the program – will be held on October 18. A list of the model schools can be found at <http://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up/model-schools>.

Mix It Up Day is a simple call to action. By asking students to move out of their comfort zones and connect with someone new over lunch, the event encourages students to identify, question and cross social boundaries. Many schools plan activities for the entire day, and some use the event to kick off a yearlong exploration of social divisions. Last year, more than 3,300 schools took part.

The Mix It Up Model Schools met five criteria: They each hosted a Mix it Up at Lunch Day in 2010; they included different members of the school's community - cafeteria staff, aides, administrators, teachers or students - in organizing the event; they followed up with at least two additional Mix It Up-related programs or events on campus; they publicized Mix It Up at Lunch Day or celebrated inclusiveness with posters, announcements and other media; and their event was seen by students and school officials as a success.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, based in Montgomery, Ala., is a nonprofit civil rights organization that combats bigotry and discrimination through litigation, education and advocacy.

