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Contact: Roberta Israeloff
(631) 662-7645

Squire Family Foundation Awards Two Grants

E. NORTHPORT, NY – The Squire Family Foundation has awarded its first grants: Professor Thomas E. Wartenberg, Professor of Philosophy at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA, received a three-year grant from the Squire Family Foundation to continue his work on philosophy for children; and the Center for Talented Youth in Baltimore, MD, has received a grant for curriculum development.

Professor Wartenberg has long been involved in teaching philosophy to elementary school children. He has developed an innovative course in which Mount Holyoke College undergraduates teach philosophy to elementary school students at the Jackson Street School in Northampton, MA, and the Martin Luther King Charter School of Excellence in Springfield, MA. His website, which the grant will allow him to expand, has received attention world-wide.

Wartenberg will also host a mini-conference at the American Philosophical Association's Pacific Division meeting in 2011 on "Teaching Children Philosophy."

"I'm very honored to have received this grant from the Squire Family Foundation," Wartenberg said. "It really opens up the possibility of introducing more children to philosophy, or, to be more precise, since many of them have already been thinking philosophically, to help them recognize and refine their thinking whenever they wonder about why things are the way they are. Awakening young minds in a communal and school setting is incredibly important, for it validates the thoughts that kids have. Too often, we don't really want to listen attentively to what children have to say about a wide range of issues, but when we do, the results are truly impressive. I can't tell you how often I'm completely amazed at the philosophical insights that elementary school children have. That's a big part of what keeps me going."

With its grant, The Center for Talented will develop curriculum for an Introduction to Philosophy course that will be taught during CTY's summer programs and offered, free of charge, on the Squire Family Foundation website, to teachers wishing to use it.

The curriculum guide will present philosophy instructors with everything they need to run a comprehensive course: an overview, a syllabus, list of readings and materials, bibliography, and supplies. The course will be developed during a special conference held at CTY to which philosophy professors and veteran educators will be invited.

CTY conducts the nation's oldest and most extensive academic talent search, seeking out bright young people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and offering them an opportunity for summer study. In 2007, 10,300 students took intensive course ranging from *Cryptology* to *Neuroscience*. Though CTY is best known for its

summer study programs, which take place on 30 university and school campuses nationally and internationally, it also sponsors family programs and hosts a robust online curriculum.

The Squire Family Foundation was founded in 2006 by Gary Squire, a Washington, D.C. attorney and businessman who studied philosophy at Yale and Oxford Universities. He has had a long-standing interest in ethics and education, serving on the board of Trustees of the Wakefield School in The Plains, VA, and as a founding member and former trustee of the City Collegiate Charter School in Washington, D.C. The Foundation advocates that all American elementary and secondary students have an opportunity to study philosophy, maintaining that the study of philosophy is important because it teaches students not what to think but rather *how* to think. Its goal is to teach students to critically and systematically examine and reflect on their beliefs so that they can act responsibly.

According to a recent article in *The New York Times*, philosophy is being embraced by a new generation of college students as the number of new philosophy majors has swelled in recent years. The resurgence can be attributed to many factors including the public dialogue about unethical behavior in business and government, and the ongoing war in Iraq.

"At the same time," said Foundation executive director Roberta Israeloff, "there is a growing interest in teaching philosophy to secondary and even elementary-school aged children. Teaching pre-college students to reason and think clearly—to take a position and construct a rational argument for it—has many benefits and may even help raise scores on standardized tests. And philosophy has a special appeal to children and teens. Developmentally, they're interested in debating the 'big' questions."

For more information about the Squire Family Foundation, visit: www.squirefoundation.org or contact Roberta Israeloff, director, at (631) 662-7645.

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