



Milwaukee Teachers'  
Education Association

Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association  
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For Immediate Release

Contact: Kris Collett, 414-259-1990, 414-807-5193

**MEDIA ADVISORY:**

**Freedom Writer Notables to be Featured at Event Kicking Off  
"A Celebration of Teaching"**

*Elementary Teacher of the Year Will Also Speak*

Milwaukee – Freedom Writer Teacher, Lisa Sanford; one of the original Freedom Writer students, Maria Reyes; and Elementary Teacher of the Year JoAnn Lens will help the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association (MTEA) kick-off "A Celebration of Teaching" on Friday, October 23.

**Date:                    Friday, October 23**

**Time:                    5:00 to 6:30 p.m. Program begins at 5:30 p.m.**

**Location:            UWM Hefter Center, 3271 N. Lake Drive**

The event, hosted by the UWM School of Education and MTEA, will launch a month-long celebration leading up to American Education Week, November 15-21, 2009.

Marking the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the New York Times #1 bestseller, *The Freedom Writers Diary*, Erin Gruwell gathered 150 teachers from across the United States and Canada to tell their stories of teaching students in and out of traditional classrooms. Their stories are published in the book, *Teaching Hope*.

Lisa Sanford, a UWM alumnus, an MPS teacher and special education transition coordinator at Northwest Secondary School is one of the Freedom Writer Teachers and Wisconsin's only contributor to the book. Lisa will read a passage from *Teaching Hope* and share her story during the program.

Maria Reyes is one of the original Freedom Writers and a contributor to *The Freedom Writers Diary*. She was featured on the cover of the book, and is portrayed in the Freedom Writers film as main character, "Eva." She will briefly share her story with educators and guests.

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JoAnn Lens, an MPS teacher at Hawley Environmental School, was recently selected as Wisconsin's Elementary Teacher of the Year.

The event is free and open to the public. RSVP is required by October 21. Please RSVP to Kris Collett, [collettk@weac.org](mailto:collettk@weac.org) or 414-259-1990.

The MTEA is a labor union representing over 8,500 teachers and education professionals working in Milwaukee Public Schools. Our mission is to promote the cause of education by improving the lives of our members and the students and families we serve.

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