



The Goldman Sachs Foundation

**The Goldman Sachs Foundation  
Prizes for Excellence  
in International Education**  
Putting the World into  
World-Class Education



Asia and International  
Studies in the Schools

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### **The Goldman Sachs Foundation Prize for Excellence in International Education goes to Independence Charter School in Philadelphia.**

**March 25, 2009 – The Asia Society announces Independence Charter School as the 2008 Elementary School/Middle School Category winner of The Goldman Sachs Foundation Prize for Excellence in International Education, a national competition first launched in 2003.** The competition recognizes and celebrates outstanding achievement in schools and educational organizations that promote cultural awareness, world history, and a global curriculum as essentials in the development of the next generation of young Americans. The elementary middle school category prize is awarded to only one public or private school a year. Philadelphia-based Independence Charter School is the first charter school in the nation to win this prestigious competition in any prize category.

**Independence Charter will receive the Prize, which includes a \$25,000 award, during a luncheon ceremony at Asia Society’s New York City headquarters today. A local celebration will also be held today at the school at 8:35 am. An excellent photo opportunity- All 732 students will be assembled in the school’s playground for a special announcement. A commemorative banner will be unveiled, and the students will be greeted by a “Rocky Balboa” character who signifies that perseverance can bring success. The festivities will continue throughout the day.**

“Given the current financial situation, our students will need a new set of skills to succeed—they will need to be internationally fluent, compassionate, and comprehensive. These award recipients are equipping the next generation of leaders with the critical international knowledge and skills they will need to lead successfully in our global society,” said Stephanie Bell-Rose, President of The Goldman Sachs Foundation.

“This is great news for the students, parents, teachers and Board Members of Independence Charter,” said Jurate Krokys, CEO and founding Principal of the school. “It is validation for our hard work these past eight years bringing a challenging world-class curriculum to an urban public charter school. Our children come from 44 zip codes in Philadelphia through a lottery—and we prove that they not only deserve excellence in education but also that they can accomplish it. This award will help raise awareness about the unique urban educational model we’ve developed and enable us to share our practices with other schools and educators, thereby benefiting even more urban students. ”

**Independence Charter School** in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is an urban public charter school serving a diverse student population of more than 700 K-8 students. Founded in 2001, the school combines two second language acquisition programs with an interdisciplinary curriculum integrating world cultures, traditions, literature, geography, economics, and history. Currently, 60% of students are enrolled in the Foreign Language in Elementary Schools Spanish program where instruction is in English with a daily 30 to 40 minute immersion session in Spanish, while the other 40% of students are based in a total Spanish immersion program in which instruction is completely in Spanish. Sixth graders receive lessons in Japanese, and seventh graders receive Arabic lessons while maintaining Spanish lessons.



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In addition to studying American History, each year students study important world regions for example: India and Chile in second grade and Afghanistan and South Africa in fifth grade. In a collaboration with iEARN (International Education and Research Network), 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are piloting online collaborative projects linking students to peers in other countries to research, produce, and share content on global citizenship. The school has partnerships with the Greater Philadelphia International Visitor Council, the Painted Bride Arts Center, The National Resource Centers at the University of Pennsylvania, and are candidates for partnership with the Embassy of Spain to provide additional content, international speakers, and to support the training of its teachers. The school also has a relationship with two schools in Uruguay through projects and teacher exchanges. [www.independencecharter.org](http://www.independencecharter.org).

“The prizes program is helping leaders rethink what it means to be an educated American in the 21<sup>st</sup> century,” said Vishakha N. Desai, President of Asia Society. “In a global age, diverse countries and cultural groups will be responsible for building the foundation for a shared future. While we are delighted by these innovations to build an internationally literate citizenry, the pace of change must now be scaled up by decision-makers at all levels.”

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### About The Goldman Sachs Foundation

The Goldman Sachs Foundation was funded in 1999 with a \$200 million donation from The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. The Foundation’s mission is to promote excellence and innovation in education worldwide. The Foundation is an important extension of the tradition of philanthropy and public leadership at Goldman Sachs. Grants have been awarded in excess of \$114 million since its inception, providing opportunities for young people in more than 20 countries. Visit the Foundation at [www.gs.com/foundation](http://www.gs.com/foundation).

### About Asia Society

Asia Society is the leading global organization working to strengthen relationships and promote understanding among the people, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the United States. We seek to enhance dialogue, encourage creative expression, and generate new ideas across the fields of policy, business, education, arts, and culture. Founded in 1956, Asia Society is a nonpartisan, nonprofit educational institution with offices in Hong Kong, Houston, Los Angeles, Manila, Melbourne, Mumbai, New York, San Francisco, Shanghai and Washington, D.C. [www.asiasociety.org](http://www.asiasociety.org), [www.askasia.org](http://www.askasia.org), [www.internationaled.org](http://www.internationaled.org)



**Independence**

CHARTER SCHOOL

*opening worlds of opportunity*