

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities selects
SHARP Literacy, Inc. for National Recognition**

***Milwaukee Literacy Agency selected as 2009 Coming Up Taller Semifinalist for
extraordinary work with children***

MILWAUKEE – May 15, 2009 - Milwaukee-based SHARP Literacy, Inc. announced today that it has been selected as a 2009 *Coming Up Taller* Semifinalist, awarded annually by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and its partner agencies, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

This recognition distinguishes the SHARP Literacy program as achieving excellence in arts and humanities-based programs in the country serving underserved children and youth beyond school hours.

As one of 50 semifinalists, SHARP Literacy was chosen from more than 420 nominations from 46 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Osan South Korean US Air Force Base. If chosen as a finalist, SHARP Literacy will be recognized by The White House, and the *Coming Up Taller* partner agencies.

“It is truly an honor to be chosen as a semifinalist for such an esteemed award,” said Marlene M. Doerr, SHARP Literacy’s Executive Director. “Everyone in the SHARP family is truly humbled by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities recognition of SHARP’s mission and work in the community.”

SHARP Literacy was recognized for its *Coming Up Taller* Semifinalist status based on its work with *The Greater Milwaukee Circle of Life project*, which addresses the important topic of healing discrimination and racism through the eyes and voices of children.

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The Greater Milwaukee Circle of Life project, developed in partnership with the Forest County Potawatomi Community Foundation, is an outgrowth of SHARP Literacy's after-school writing and interview activities and addresses the need in Milwaukee to unify people of all races, and to show that each one of us is part of something greater.

"It is because of the hard work and keen insights of the children involved in our program that SHARP was recognized for this award," Doerr continued. "I hope the *Coming Up Taller* recognition will help us continue to build awareness in Milwaukee for the creative learning experience and the need to help our children develop a much deeper understanding of themselves, and of the world in which they live."

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SHARP Literacy, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) Milwaukee nonprofit educational program whose sole mission is to utilize art history and the visual arts as a learning tool in students' classrooms. The primary goal of SHARP Literacy is to provide elementary school students with an imaginative learning experience that builds confidence, self-esteem, and a greater awareness of the world. Through the use of visual arts and art history, teachers and students are educated and engaged in an innovative and affordable program that strengthens the basic reading and writing learning skills.

Marlene M. Doerr was awarded the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts Eddy Award in 2008 and received the 2008 Milwaukee Business Journal's Women of Influence Award. In 2007, she was the recipient of the Marquette University Kairos Award.