

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Contact: Pati Urias

602.568.9763

psuprconsultants@gmail.com

**ARIZONA STEM EDUCATION CENTER (STEMAz) HONORS
TUCSON TEACHER AS AN “INNOVATION HERO”**

*New Program Recognizes Teachers and Students
Making Contributions in
Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Education*

(TUCSON, Arizona - May 12, 2009) –The Arizona Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Education Center at Science Foundation Arizona (STEMAz) is recognizing Michael Marbut, a sixth grade math and science teacher, with an *Innovation Hero* award for his extraordinary education efforts.

Innovation Heroes are outstanding students or teachers nominated by the community who are making significant advances in Arizona STEM education. The first of these ongoing, statewide awards is co-sponsored by the Rodel Foundation of Arizona and Intel Corporation. The program kicked off earlier this month and raises public awareness for STEM education’s importance in strengthening Arizonans’ job readiness in a competitive 21st century economy.

Marbut is among one of the first *Innovation Heroes* to be honored this year, and is a teacher at Laguna Elementary in the Flowing Wells District of Tucson. He has been an instrumental member of a team that designed and constructed a 13,500-gallon pond known as the “tortoise habitat” and a learning greenhouse built as a miniature version of the Sonoran Desert titled, the “Laguna Desert Loop Trail.” Both of these innovations are aiding students in hands-on science and math learning.

Marbut also encourages interactive education activities outside of the classroom. Each year he raises money for Laguna’s sixth-graders to visit important archaeological and historical sites in Northern Arizona. As an Innovation Hero, Marbut, receives a \$500 gift card to be used toward education materials and teaching supplies.

“We know that there is a direct correlation between greater focus in science and math and having a ready workforce for the jobs of today and the future,” said Darcy Renfro, executive director of STEMaz. “There are so many examples of teachers doing innovative things to engage students and make science and math concepts interesting to young people. Michael Marbut is clearly one of these teachers who has developed new learning methods that involve and excite students in a very hands-on way.”

“We are pleased to support the recognition of individuals who are making such significant strides to bring more science and math into Arizona classrooms, and we congratulate Mr. Marbut for his dedication to our students,” said Carol Peck, Rodel Foundation president and CEO.

“Intel is committed to inspiring the next generation of innovators and ensuring high quality education and high quality graduates for Arizona,” said Cathleen Barton, education manager, Intel Corporation. “We congratulate Mr. Marbut on his award and thank him for his commitment to helping Arizona students see how engineers make a world of difference.”

"Modern and future professions in most industries will need candidates who can use STEM problem-solving skills," said Richard Adkerson, president and CEO of Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold. "Whether in mining or any other sector, employers will seek workers who have mastered concepts in science and math."

STEMAz’s Innovation Heroes program recognizes individuals across Arizona, with nominations being accepted monthly during the school year. The program’s first awards have been made and a new round of awards will be begin in August, 2009.

Marbut was nominated by Laguna Elementary’s principal, Theresa Leal-Holmes.

-30-

With the support of private industry and the community, Science Foundation Arizona launched STEMAz in 2008 to enhance Arizona's capacity and achievement in STEM education, critical components of an innovation-based economy. To learn more about STEMAz and/or to nominate an Innovation Hero, visit www.sfaz.org.

Major funding for STEMAz is provided by Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold.