

Southwest Institute for ViolenceFree Learning

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Brisenia Flores Memorial Award

The Southwest Institute for ViolenceFree Learning – SWIVL – announces the Brisenia Flores Memorial Award. On May 30, 2009 – Nine-year-old Brisenia Flores was sleeping soundly in her bed in Arivaca, Arizona when she was awakened. In a moment, little Brisenia and her father were shot and killed. While the reasons behind this senseless killing will be debated and discussed in detail, the memory of this beautiful young girl is a reminder that life is precious, and that it's time to reassess what we are doing personally, socially, and politically to keep our families and children safe.

The first annual Brisenia Flores Memorial Award will take place at the school that Brisenia attended - Sopori Elementary School (Amado, Arizona). The purpose of the Brisenia Flores Memorial Award is to honor Brisenia Flores by providing opportunities for intermediate grade children to relate to companion and farmed animals in new and different ways. Participating students will examine their relationship with a companion or farmed animal by maintaining a journal around the following questions:

- What have you learned from this special relationship?
- What does being kind to animals mean to you?
- What can you do to create a more compassionate and responsible community?

Through their participation, students, with their parents and teachers, will create a new sense of compassion and care for animals which can be applied to their day-to-day relationships in school, home, and the community.

Six student winners will be chosen from the companion animal category – Two students from 4th, 5th, and 6th grades.

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Six student winners will be chosen from the farmed animal category – Two students from 4th, 5th, and 6th grades.

All 12 students will receive a \$25.00 VISA cash award.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented by LD 25 House of Representatives Member, the Honorable Pat Fleming on March 11, 2010 at Sopori School.

All winners, parents/guardians, and teachers are invited to attend a celebration party at SWIVL on Sunday, March 28, 2010 from 2-4 p.m.

For those who knew Brisenia, she had a unwavering love for animals and a passion for life. Brisenia was a joyful young girl who loved everyone she met. According to SWIVL Executive Director, Dr. Kathleen Wishnick, the Brisenia Flores Memorial Award will help students become more responsible and self-reliant by experiencing firsthand the love and friendship they can have with a companion or farmed animal. SWIVL hopes the memory of Brisenia Flores will help children connect their hearts and minds as they dream of a life filled with hope, possibility and most of all compassion.

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OUR Mission: SWIVL works to create a ViolenceFree environment through personal investment.

- ❑ All services provided by SWIVL increase personal and social capacity to accomplish goals and mobilize resources to promote a ViolenceFree environment.
- ❑ SWIVL works with other public and private organizations to take a systemic approach to ending all forms of violence, including animal cruelty, child abuse, and domestic violence. Formed in 2003 as a 501(c)3, SWIVL is a nonprofit organization established to respond to the growing state of violence and discord in our families, communities, nation, and world.

SWIVL promotes the view that violence can be eliminated or mitigated through the development of a culture of success - beliefs and attitudes that encourage a personal progressive culture and social independent climate.

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