

YOUTH FRONTIERS, INC.
WWW.YOUTHFRONTIERS.ORG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Melissa Metzler
Youth Frontiers, Inc.
melissa@youthfrontiers.org

(952) 922-0222 office
(612) 618-9249 cell

**YOUTH FRONTIERS HONORS FOUR STUDENTS AND ONE
TEACHER IN FRONT OF A SELL-OUT CROWD**

Minneapolis, MN. (May 4, 2005) —Non-profit Youth Frontiers honored students of character from Brooklyn Center, Plymouth, Hopkins, and Circle Pines and presented a faculty award to a veteran teacher from Aurora during its annual YF Experience event held April 25, 2005 in Minneapolis.

Abdul Sesay, a Brooklyn Center resident and 4th-grade student at Evergreen Elementary School, received the Youth Frontiers' Student of Character Kindness Award. His teacher Beth Neil nominated him for the award. Neil wrote: "Abdul frequently defends students being verbally assaulted with no regard to his own status. He arrived from Sierra Leone with no literacy skills in January 2004. The deplorable circumstances that Abdul has endured would destroy anyone's spirit. Abdul has not only overcome his past, but exemplifies what most people would like to be. His sincerity is surpassed only by his integrity."

Annalise Heitz, a Plymouth resident and 7th-grade student at Wayzata West Middle School, received the Youth Frontiers' Student of Character Courage Award for her courageous acts at school among her peers. Her teacher Kelly Gallagher nominated her for the award. Gallagher wrote, "Anna is not afraid to let others know, in an encouraging and positive way, that they may be making choices that are not in their best interest. Anna is not swayed by the popular crowd or what is considered "cool.""

Brandon Keinath, a Circle Pines resident and 12th-grade student at Centennial High School, received the Youth Frontiers' Student of Character Respect Award for his respectful actions towards fellow students and his teachers. He was nominated for the

--continued--

award by his teacher Elizabeth Eaton. Eaton wrote, “I know that I can count on Brandon to step up to challenges that most kids would roll their eyes at, and he does this with grace and a positive attitude. He has a strong commitment to the task at hand.”

Zhi Li, a Hopkins resident and 12th-grade student at Hopkins High School, received the Youth Frontiers’ *Make a Stand* Student of Character Award for his outstanding community leadership. *Make a Stand* Program Manager Kelli Doss nominated him for the award. Doss says his strong community involvement and positive attitude made him stand out among his peers.

Rose Anttila, a teacher at Mesabi East Schools in Aurora, was honored with the Youth Frontiers’ Faculty Award. Director of Faculty Retreats Rob Kesselring nominated her for the award. He nominated her because 10 years ago she began a small group support and mentoring program, which continues to this day. She has been teaching for 29 years, 27 of which have been in The Iron Range.

The honorees were applauded by a sell-out crowd of 320 at Theatre de la Jeune Lune in Minneapolis. The four students each received a \$500 savings bond that were donated to Youth Frontiers, and Rose Anttila received a donated hotel stay and gift package.

Youth Frontiers (www.youthfrontiers.org) delivers programs that improve school climate and strengthen student character in primary and secondary schools throughout Minnesota and beyond state borders. During the 2004/05 school year, Youth Frontiers is bringing 500 retreats to a total of 75,000 students in addition to developing middle and high school student leaders through its *Make a Stand* program and working with teachers through its faculty retreats program. Youth Frontiers, Inc. was founded in 1987 by Joe Cavanaugh, who now serves as its CEO.

--end--