Grandmaster to test skills of local chess players

By Jen Roppel

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Cincinnati Public Schools teacher Svetlana Reed is the first recipient of the Havihurst Outstanding Teacher of Russian Studies Award.

The award is for exemplary Russian language teachers, open to all grade levels, kindergarten through 12th-grade, said Karen Dawisha, director of Miami University’s newly established Havihurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies.

The annual award was created in conjunction with the Russian Education Department, Dawisha said, and will be given to only one educator each year.

“They did a national search and selected a teacher in the Cincinnati Public Schools,” Dawisha said.

Reed, a Russian native, said she has been teaching Russian in the district’s bilingual magnet school, the Academy of World Languages, since 1957.

She said she was recognized because of the outstanding achievement of her pupils.

Reed said that many students who become fluent, she said, “This is absolutely a unique program. I have 5-year-olds all the way up to eighth grade.”

Reed said that learning a language is easier for young children than for teenagers and adults, which is why her students are able to compete and succeed in national Russian language competitions and earn collegiate credit.

Kids’ minds are very open. The kids’ minds are like sponges. They don’t have all the baggage that older students do,” Reed said, starting in kindergarten, and you see actual results. For me as a professional it is very rewarding to see that,” she said.

Reed said that across the nation more schools need to adopt bilingual programs.

“I just hope that people will understand the value to become bilingual,” Reed said, “and that foreign language would be chosen for elementary schools and would be in the curriculum of every school.”

“We are now a multicultural and global society. You need to know more than one language,” she said. “You can get on a plane and in a couple of hours you can be in a different country and not know the language,” Reed said.

“A major benefit of the achievements of her Russian language pupils, Reed said she will bring about 20 to 30 new students to Miami as part of the Imagining Russia educational programs,” Reed said. “We will have a special program on April 1 to celebrate the inauguration of the Miami University Havihurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies.”

Reed will showcase her students during a “Teachers Imagine Russia” workshop from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on March 24 in McInroy Hall. Teachers from throughout southwestern Ohio and eastern Indiana will be in attendance.

Other Art exhibits, musical performances and workshops to highlight the 11-day event include:

- “Imagining Russia” foyer exhibition at the Miami University Art Museum. Featured will be a selection of southwestern Ohio’s early 20th century prints, watercolors and illustrated books with a theme of Russian folk tales and stories. Admission is free.

- An annual reception is 3:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. March 31.

- “Imagining Russia” student exhibition sponsored by the department of arts “Saturday Art” program. An exhibition is 3:30 p.m. Saturday, March 24, in the art building with Russian refreshments.

- “Twilight of the Soviet Union,” in Harrison Hall, home of the Center for Performing Arts.

- Performances of “A Night of Tchaikovsky” will be 3 p.m. Saturday, March 24, in Hargrave Hall, home of the Center for Performing Arts.

- A detailed schedule is available online, www.m.uh.edu/hav Uhrhustcenter.