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### **Questa Foundation for Education Appoints Christina Smith Executive Director**



May 4, 2009, Fort Wayne: The board of directors of the Questa Foundation for Education has appointed Fort Wayne native Christina K. Smith its new executive director.

Questa's mission is to expand educational opportunity and encourage greater financial freedom for Allen County, college-bound students by providing affordable loans and generous scholarships that reward academic success and retain college graduates in northeast Indiana.

"Christina brings a breadth and depth of leadership experience and a strong commitment to strengthening communities through educational opportunity that will allow Questa Foundation to expand our strategic impact and provide an even greater number of loans and scholarships to deserving young people in our community," said John Stein, president of the board of directors of the Questa Foundation for Education.

Originally established more than 70 years ago as the Fort Wayne Educational Foundation by R. Nelson Snider, principal of South Side High School, Questa sponsors the 1/2 Back Loan Program that offers qualified students forgiveness of up to 50 percent of their Questa Scholars loan if they graduate from college with at least a 2.75 GPA and choose to reside and work in northeast Indiana for at least five years after graduation.

Smith's diverse professional profile includes extensive governmental and humanitarian service in the Middle East and Central Asia as well as leadership in higher education and public policy. A Middle East and Muslim affairs expert, she has served as a foreign policy consultant to three U.S. presidents and world leaders in Kuwait, Iraq, Bosnia, Albania, the Palestinian territories and, most recently, Afghanistan.

Smith returned to Indiana in late 2007 with a clear purpose: "I desire to invest this season of my life in giving back to my hometown of Fort Wayne as an expression of appreciation for all this community has offered to me educationally and professionally.

“I’m excited to serve as an ‘educational ambassador’ on behalf of our community's young people as Questa seeks to spur economic development in northeast Indiana by helping to educate and retain intellectual capital that will make our region an even better place to live, work, learn and serve.”

Smith succeeds Maureen Grinsfelder, who retired in January after serving for 15 years.

Smith received a master of arts degree in international relations from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Va., and a bachelor of arts degree in history and biblical studies from Huntington University.

She has served as an adjunct instructor at the University of Virginia, Huntington University and Kuwait University. Smith is a recipient of numerous academic honors, including the distinguished Richard M. Weaver Fellowship.

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