



# Irvine Unified School District

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Five IUSD workers surprised with Classified Employee of the Year honors** *Recipients are praised for going 'above and beyond' to support Irvine's schools*

IRVINE, Calif. – Local representatives of the California School Employees Association (CSEA), in cooperation with the Irvine Unified School District (IUSD), have selected five outstanding IUSD workers to be this year's Classified Employees of the Year.

The honorees – two head custodians, a nutrition services assistant, an instructional assistant and a lead night custodian – were surprised with the news at their work sites on Wednesday, May 20, during the state-recognized Classified School Employees Week.

“We have so many incredible classified employees in this district who support our students and enable all of the successes that occur in our classrooms,” said Superintendent of Schools Gwen Gross. “These five individuals in particular have exemplified passion, enthusiasm and attention to detail while pushing above and beyond the limits of their job descriptions.”

The 2009 Classified Employees of the Year are:

- **Jose Garcia, Head Custodian, Creekside Education Center.** Jose oversees the night and weekend custodians and ensures his campus is clean, safe and secure. He's willing to take on any task, and he's earned a reputation for anticipating the needs of the staff. Greeting everyone with a kind word and a smile, Jose has developed a strong rapport with students and volunteered his time to organize an after-school soccer program at Creekside.
- **Rosemarie Klucsar, Nutrition Services Assistant, Venado Middle School.** Rosemarie, who joined the Venado staff in September 2008, has spent 11 years in Nutrition Services. Exhibiting boundless energy and enthusiasm, she has revamped the meal program at Venado by expanding menu choices, speeding up serving lines and enlisting student participation. Her impact is also felt outside the cafeteria, where she recently involved students in a drive to write letters of appreciation to members of the U.S. military.
- **Raul Manriquez, Head Custodian, Rancho San Joaquin Middle School.** Colleagues say Raul has made an enormous impact on Rancho with a work ethic that is unmatched.

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*IUSD ... providing the highest quality educational experience we can envision.*

As such, he's been instrumental in training many new custodians. Proactive and attentive to detail, Raul ensures each day that the Rancho facilities and fields are immaculate. Moreover, he maintains a positive attitude and is always willing to assist others.

- **David Smallwood, Lead Night Custodian, University High School.** Colleagues describe David as hard working, engaging and committed to his school and its staff. In addition to cleaning classrooms and overseeing his custodial crew, David is responsible for setting up the gym, theater, quad, library and multipurpose room for special events. Illustrating his level of dedication, he once famously postponed shoulder surgery so that he could set up and assist with a three-day convention.
- **Mary Titus, Instructional Assistant, Visual and Performing Arts.** Beloved by students and admired by the staff, Mary is a professional flautist and a dependable instructional assistant who shares her musical gifts as part of IUSD's Visual and Performing Arts Department. In addition to setting up equipment, Mary rotates between three teachers and diligently helps fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students grasp the basics of stringed instruments, wind instruments and choral music.

This year's Classified Employees of the Year were chosen by a committee made up of eight members, including local CSEA President Janelle Cranch, IUSD Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Terry Walker, Human Resources Director Rena Thompson and the five winners from last year.

Nomination forms were sent out to all schools and district sites in April, and the committee received dozens of submissions. Committee members narrowed the field to five after interviewing a cross-section of each nominee's coworkers. Each Classified Employee of the Year will receive \$1,000 and a commemorative plaque.

With so many outstanding candidates to choose from, Cranch said the committee looked for those who pushed beyond the limits of their job descriptions to make a positive impact.

"Our selection process is extremely comprehensive and impartial," Cranch said. "As a result, the five employees that we honor today truly are the best of the best."

Represented by CSEA, classified employees include secretaries, custodians, paraeducators, bus drivers, maintenance technicians, clerks, food services staff members and other non-certificated district workers. To honor their contributions, IUSD's Board of Education in April passed a resolution proclaiming the week of May 18 through May 22 "Classified School Employee Week."

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