



Irvine Unified School District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 19, 2010

Five IUSD workers recognized as 2010 Classified Employees of the Year *Recipients, who are surprised with the news at their work sites, each get \$1,000*

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 – an electrical foreman, an assessment specialist, an instructional assistant, an administrative assistant to the principal and an ASB accountant – were surprised with the news at their work sites on Wednesday, May 19, during the state-recognized Classified School Employees Week.

“We are so fortunate to have exemplary classified employees whose contributions enable all of the wonderful things that go on in our classrooms,” said IUSD Superintendent of Schools Gwen Gross. “In particular, these five individuals have gone above and beyond in the service of our students and our communities, exhibiting passion, enthusiasm and attention to detail.”

The 2010 Classified Employees of the Year are:

Michael Edman, Electrical Foreman, Maintenance and Operations. A district employee since 1994, Mike is admired for being dependable, loyal and dedicated to both his work and personal responsibilities. Coworkers consider him a visionary in his profession, one who is constantly reading and researching to make informed, educated decisions. A member of IUSD's energy team, Mike has helped develop a number of strategies in the push toward sustainability, including a switch to more energy-efficient light bulbs.

Thao Huynh, Assessment Specialist, District Office. Thao, who has worked in the Assessment and Evaluation Department since 2003, has emerged as an expert on IUSD's student data system. Moreover, she plays a critical role in administering statewide assessments, including the Standardized Testing and Reporting program, the California High School Exit Exam and the state's physical fitness test. Beyond her technical capabilities, she is widely recognized as a diligent and organized worker with an exemplary attitude.

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

Ahmad Mirsafian, Instructional Assistant, Northwood High School. Ahmad begins each day more than an hour early to organize and prepare materials, and he always greets students with a smile. Described by coworkers as compassionate, caring and efficient, Ahmad possesses the rare ability to elicit the best from his students, despite their varying academic levels and severe physical and cognitive disabilities. Colleagues say he brings conflict management skills, creativity and a love of learning to the Northwood program.

Karen Roggero, Administrative Assistant to the Principal, Stonegate Elementary School. Karen manages an office that is a model of efficiency and warmth, despite a torrent of responsibilities. This year, she was instrumental in the opening of Stonegate, as well as its subsequent dedication ceremony and its successful application to be a California Distinguished School. Characterized as the “consummate professional,” Karen has a breadth of technical and educational knowledge – and a gift for making others feel they’re the top priority.

Susan Weatherholt, ASB Accountant, Northwood High School. Susan has been characterized as the “mom” of Northwood High, taking care of staff, students and parents. The finances associated with every school event run through her office, and registration was recently added to her list of responsibilities. Yet Susan skillfully handles the job with grace, patience and humor. Generous with her time and knowledge, Susan patiently trains club advisors, club officers, activities directors, students, coaches and anyone else in need.

This year’s Classified Employees of the Year were chosen by a committee made that included 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 – courtesy of the Irvine Public Schools Foundation – as well as a jacket and 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 has passed a resolution proclaiming the week of May 17 through May 21 “Classified School Employee Week.”

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