

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

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For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces:

Countywide *Excellence in Education* Winners Announced

Teacher of the Year, School Employee of the Year and Administrator/Manager of the Year Named

A selection committee of 20 Tulare County business and educational leaders met last week to choose the Tulare County Administrator/Manager of the Year, Teacher of the Year and School Employee of the Year for 2011. The *Excellence in Education Awards* program, now celebrating its 17th year, honors “the best of the best” in three educational categories - administrator/manager, teacher and school employee. A total of 29 nominations were received this year from Tulare County school districts. Each nomination was reviewed and scored individually by every member of the selection committee.

“The winners are people who are committed to educating the whole child – academically, socially and emotionally,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “Their dedication extends well into their respective communities. We have so many great teachers, school employees and administrators in Tulare County. It’s an honor to recognize them through this program.”

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Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak is pleased to announce the following

Excellence in Education winners:

Administrator of the Year

Sue Ann Hillman, Director of Curriculum, Tulare City School District

Sue Ann Hillman has worked as an educator in the Tulare City School District for 31 years. As the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, her contagious “we can do it” attitude is reflected in the way teachers and students interact with one another. Her strong people skills, team spirit and flexibility allow her to deal with challenges without losing focus of the district’s mission and goals. District Superintendent, Luis Castellanoz says, “Sue Ann is always seeking ways to respond to diverse community interests and needs, and is a great advocate for children.” She exemplifies exceptional leadership in managing many of the district programs including the Gang Resistance Education and Training Program, Gifted and Talented Education, Spelling Bee, Math Super Bowl, Poetry and Prose, and SCICON visits, to name a few. Mrs. Hillman is highly committed to the professional development of all district staff members, which is instrumental in the success of both teachers and students. Her secretary, Pam Sotelo, says, “She treats everyone with the deepest respect and is genuinely interested in hearing how teachers are doing, and what she can do to make things better for them.” A former G.A.T.E. student tells of Mrs. Hillman’s classroom leadership and dynamic lessons that stretched their thinking and motivated them, making learning new and complicated lessons fun. Sue Ann is an energetic and prominent member of the Tulare community, and is known for her impeccable character.

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Teacher of the Year

Richard Lambie, P.E. Teacher, Granite Hills High School, Porterville Unified School District

Far more than an athletic coach, Rich Lambie is inspiring his students to be better citizens in their community, to play their sport with the highest ethical standards, and to be genuine leaders on their campus. “My first visit to a Granite Hills High School volleyball practice left me at a loss for words,” says Kelley Petty, Tulare County CHARACTER COUNTS! Coordinator. “This man had a four-step plan detailing how his girls would not only approach their volleyball season, but make a difference on their campus, give back to their community and have fun!” Porterville Unified Superintendent John Snavelly says, “Students repeat Coach Lambie’s advice that ‘the biggest wins are not on the court or wrestling mat but in the hearts and minds of kids.’” Coach Lambie knows how to put his advice into action. Every season, he demonstrates what a few high school girls can do to change a city with a community service campaign. In the past, he and his players developed the “Knots for Love” program. The players made over 200 quilts for children referred to Child Welfare Services. This year, the team launched “Today’s Readers – Tomorrow’s Leaders.” Through this program, his players visit Porterville elementary classrooms to read stories and share their goals in life. By the end of their visit, they are viewed as role models, friendships are made, and elementary students are ready to stay in school and become leaders! Mr. Lambie has been an educator since 1978.

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School Employee of the Year

Teresa Sharley, Child Welfare & Attendance Officer, Tulare City School District

As the Child Welfare & Attendance Officer for the Tulare City School District (TCSD), Teresa Sharley often sees students in the most heartbreaking situations – homeless, in poverty or in the midst of an expulsion or a custody situation. Mulcahy Middle School Principal Terri Slover said, “Teresa Sharley is the most, caring, giving, no-nonsense, top-notch person I’ve ever worked with.”

Teresa is the district’s Foster Youth Liaison, Chairperson for the School Attendance Review Board, (SARB) and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison. As such, she and her staff constantly monitor students in the district’s 14 schools. Her nominators praised her tireless effort to help students and families through legal situations or with basic necessities of food, shelter, clothing and transportation. TCSD Assistant Superintendent Dr. Clare Gist said, “In many ways she supports the homeless youth of Tulare as she does her own four children, with respect, compassion, and understanding.”

Awards Program

Award recipients, finalists and nominees will be honored at a recognition breakfast beginning at 7:30 a.m. on October 19, 2011, at the Visalia Convention Center. Event attendees will enjoy a video portraying the work of the overall winners.

“We greatly appreciate the support of our partners in this event – the Educational Employees Credit Union, its President/CEO Beth Dooley, and board of directors,” says Jim Vidak. “Together,

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we have the privilege of recognizing the many talented men and women who devote their lives to educating children and young adults in Tulare County.”

For more information, contact Marlene Moreno, Administrative Assistant, at (559) 733-6302.

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