

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

September 23, 2004

For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces: Eleventh Annual Educators of the Year Awards Ceremony September 23, 2004 · Chinese Cultural Center, Visalia

Tonight, the Tulare County Office of Education will join the Central California Chinese Cultural Center in honoring three individuals as part of the Eleventh Annual Confucius' Birthday/ Educators of the Year Celebration. "Our partnership with the Central California Chinese Cultural Center is one of the most visible ways we recognize teachers from throughout Tulare County for their creativity, dedication and passion for teaching," says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. "This year's honorees join an elite group of past winners – the very finest elementary, middle and high school teachers in the county." The 2004 Educators of the Year are Dawn Dutto, Joy Soares and Suzanne Zuiderweg McElmoyl.

Dawn Dutto is a third-grade teacher at Sundale Elementary. Dawn received a Bachelor of Science degree from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. A teacher since 1966, she has taught for San Luis Obispo Unified, Selma Unified, Palo Verde Elementary and — in 1979 — joined the staff of Sundale Elementary. She is actively involved at Sundale and is a former publisher of the student newspaper. Dawn says: "Children want to succeed, and we are obligated to do everything in our power to show them the way." With five grown children of her own, Dawn and her husband were involved in many swim meets, the Tulare Union High School Band Boosters, and various PTA and parent clubs.

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Joy Soares is an eighth-grade Language Arts/History teacher at Kings River Elementary School. Joy received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications from CSU Sacramento and multiple subject credential from Chapman University. She began her professional career as a marketing manager for Ruiz Food Products in Dinuba and was promoted to vice president of Logistics and Marketing, but felt drawn to teaching. Joy joined the Kings River faculty in 1999. Her philosophy of education stems from her vast senior management experience. She believes: "Successful students, like successful businesses, must find a competitive edge." One of her greatest interests is Civil War history. Her classes actively participate in the Civil War Revisted event co-sponsored by the Tulare County Office of Education.

Suzanne Zuiderweg McElmoyl is a Social Studies/Enrichment teacher at Lindsay High School. Suzanne graduated from College of the Sequoias, earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Fresno State University and a single subject credential from Chapman University. She has six years of teaching experience and currently instructs students in U.S. History and Academic Enrichment. Prior to entering the field of education, Suzanne was a social services director for the Tulare Nursing and Rehabilitation Hospital. She is experienced in child/adolescent development, family counseling and special needs of the developmentally disabled. Suzanne is co-chair of the Lindsay High School Accreditation Committee and coordinator of Focus on Achievement. She says: "Education should encourage each student to explore their interests and talents and provide a support system for their achievements."

For more information on the event, contact Public Information Officer Robert Herman at 733-6606.

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