

Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

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For Immediate Release

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26th annual *Excellence in Education* winners to be honored virtually Tuesday, October 27

Winners, finalists and nominees in the annual *Excellence in Education* Awards program will be honored virtually this year. In lieu of the traditional awards breakfast, a video capturing their accomplishments will be posted on TCOE's social media platforms, YouTube channel, and website (tcoe.org/ExcellenceInEducation) on Tuesday, October 27 at 9:00 a.m.

This year, a total of 26 nominees were chosen to participate in the competition. The nominees were submitted by Tulare County school districts and the Tulare County Office of Education in three categories – Administrator/Manager of the Year, Teacher of the Year, and School Employee of the Year. A committee of Tulare County business and educational leaders individually reviewed and scored each nominee to determine the winners earlier this year.

“The common trait we see in these fine individuals is that they have taken on responsibilities far beyond their regular duties,” said Tim Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools. “They have used their talents to advance their schools and their districts, creating extraordinary educational cultures and practices for the benefit of their students.”

WINNERS

2020 ADMINISTRATOR/MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Philip Pierschbacher

Assistant Superintendent of Personnel, Tulare City School District

“Leaders are servants,” believes Philip Pierschbacher. “In order to get the best out of each member of the team to the benefit of our students, leaders must be relational, consider others’ strengths and weaknesses, and set the example,” he said. “It’s no easy task, but I have found that motivation and productivity increases tenfold when those on the team trust their leader, and see themselves as valued.”

Words such as honesty, integrity, and respectfulness were used to describe Mr. Pierschbacher. Nominators credited him for being able to listen, guide, and value others' opinions, and to build confidence in his peers. As a 30-year veteran of the Tulare City School District, Mr. Pierschbacher

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has served as a teacher, vice principal, principal, and district office administrator, and is currently the assistant superintendent of Personnel. In his present role, he ensures the success of Tulare's students by recruiting the best teachers possible, often saying, "We look for only the best for our students." Throughout the school year, he spends time assisting in the classroom so as not to lose touch with what it's like to be a teacher. He also oversees the district's transportation and grounds keeping departments, ensuring that students are safe and that their learning environments are well maintained.

Mr. Pierschbacher is also involved in the community, volunteering through his church, service clubs, and Leadership Tulare, while maintaining excellent relationships with Tulare City Teachers Association and the California School Employees' Association. Nominators say that he gets involved, asks questions, and develops important relationships in these capacities because he truly cares about the community in which he serves.

2020 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Stacy Trapletti

Seventh-Grade Mathematics Teacher, Cherry Avenue Middle School, Tulare City School District

Teacher, social and academic events coordinator, Student Council advisor, fundraiser, athletic coach, and bundle of energy, seventh-grade math teacher Stacy Trapletti was praised by her nominators as the hardest working member of the staff at Cherry Avenue Middle School in Tulare. She not only puts in endless hours to see that her students succeed in the classroom, she also works countless hours outside the classroom on campus and community projects.

In the classroom, the 35-year veteran incorporates hands-on activities, cooperative learning, games, competitions, and songs and rhymes to teach math concepts. Students of all learning levels feel welcomed and valued in her classroom. "Bringing the real world into what I teach has helped my students realize why they are learning the skills and standards that they are being exposed to," she said. "From balancing their own checkbooks, building a city, purchasing stocks, or understanding math facts by playing fantasy football, I love it when I am able to help struggling students believe in themselves just a little bit more. The smiles on their faces, or saying, 'I get it,' are my bonuses."

Mrs. Trapletti has served as a district mentor teacher as well as a master teacher over the years, always prepared to walk next door to help a colleague. She has also served as Cherry Avenue's Math Super Bowl coach, Student Council advisor, coordinator of numerous social and fundraising events, as well as a leader in the school garden and other campus beautification projects. Most recently, she and her students have been involved in creating a mosaic of the school's mascot in front of the school, learning about math throughout the process.

2020 SCHOOL EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Micaela Macareno

Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District

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“Superwoman,” is the term Superintendent Yolanda Valdez used to sum up the qualities of her assistant Micaela Macareno. “She is the mother of four children, a wife, folkloric instructor, CEO of her nonprofit organization, community activist and champion for children,” she said. Mrs. Macareno has been described as a problem solver with unique forward-thinking qualities, while being level headed under great pressure.

In addition to her duties supporting the superintendent and board of trustees, Mrs. Macareno has become the district’s marketer, creating graphics and promotional materials for events and services. School sites, nonprofits, and community members often seek her expertise to market their events. Additionally, she recently implemented a district newsletter that serves to promote all the events and accomplishments of students, staff, and schools in the district. Mrs. Macareno also assisted Superintendent Valdez in developing a Women’s Conference for mothers and daughters which attracted 750 attendees. She has had leadership roles in many other district events, including the Noche de Oro fundraiser for work-based learning programs, health fairs, theater productions, and bond campaigns.

Although she is not a resident of the Cutler-Orosi area, she believes in its educational mission and vision so much that she transferred her four children to the district and has been involved as a parent volunteer for their academic competitions. Mrs. Macareno is also an instructor and director of Ballet Folklorico Del Lago, a youth Mexican cultural dance program. Additionally, she co-founded the nonprofit JEMA Foundation, which supports the cultural enrichment of youth in the Central Valley through philanthropy, community events, education, literacy, and recreation.

FINALISTS

Administrator/Manager of the Year

Cheri Doria, Director of Preschools, Lindsay Preschool, Lindsay Unified School District

José Luis Pérez, Assistant Principal, Orosi High School, Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District

Teacher of the Year

John Coon, Agriculture Teacher, Redwood High School, Visalia Unified School District

Eric Kyle York, Science Teacher, Tulare Union High School, Tulare Joint Union High School District

School Employee of the Year

Stephen Boswell, Bus Driver, Tulare City School District

Erica Galindo, Instructional Aide, Blue Oak Academy, The Academies Charter Management Organization

For more information, including a list of the winners, finalists and nominees, visit www.tcoe.org/ExcellenceInEducation. The Excellence in Education program is a partnership between the Tulare County Office of Education and EECU.

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