

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE

LEARNING Together



We are finding new ways to connect during distance learning. Top left, Garfield kindergarten teacher Honey Sullivan Zooms her students, top right, to show them the class butterfly emerging from its chrysalis. Bottom right, Weldon Elementary Principal Ray Lozano makes a video of morning announcements to share on Pajama Day. Bottom middle and left, school parades give students and teachers a chance to support one another.

Photos special to CUSD Today.

RESOURCES

LEARNING continues in Clovis Unified. Parents and students are encouraged to talk with their teacher – through email, Zoom or a phone call – to discuss specific needs regarding academics. They are here to help.



SUPPLEMENTAL online resources for elementary and secondary students are available. They include support and instruction tutorials, as well as virtual field trips, story times and art projects. Visit cUSD.com/COVID-19OurStudents.aspx.

TECHNOLOGY help is available online at cUSD.com/TechnologyHelpForStudents.aspx or by calling the CUSD Technology Help Desk at 327-9595.

MEALS are available for children ages 1 to 18. They are distributed weekly and include five days' worth of breakfasts and lunches. For updated locations and details, visit cUSD.com and look under Lunch Schedule.



"TOGETHER WE'VE GOT THIS" is a video series created by our school counselors and psychologists to offer practical ways to help with emotional wellness. Each 4-minute video focuses on a topic such as building routine, ways to interact and having healthy conversations. Videos are on Clovis Unified's Facebook page and cUSD.com.

GRADUATION 2020

Graduation celebrations for Class of 2020!

CUSD Today

Caps and gowns are on their way and it is time to celebrate our graduating seniors!

While we share in the heartbreaking disappointment caused by the coronavirus restrictions keeping us from holding our traditional ceremonies and end-of-the-year events, our enthusiasm for our seniors cannot be stopped!

The Class of 2020 will be celebrated in Clovis Unified style, and we know proud parents, family and friends will join us in creative ways to make this milestone occasion a very special one for our beloved seniors.

The district has developed a three-part graduation plan after considering hundreds of suggestion, concerns and comments sent to us through a Facebook Live discussion, emails, surveys and phone calls. The plans include individual senior experiences in the next few weeks at the stadiums; a video release on the originally scheduled school graduation night along with skylights in school colors at the school site; and a delayed full-school ceremony in late July if mass gatherings are allowed by the state.

Specific schedules and details will be distributed through high schools, but the following provides an overview look at the festivities ahead:

Walking the Stage Now

Pomp and Circumstance? You bet! During the final weeks of May and early June, our graduating seniors will be as-

signed an individual time to arrive to their home stadium where a stage decorated in their school colors and graduation regalia will be waiting for them. Students can be joined by four members of their household (following gathering limitation guidelines). The student's name will be announced and the graduation march played as the senior walks across the stage to receive his or her diploma from the principal. Photos, available for download, will be taken by a professional photographer and each student will receive a free 5x7 print. Proud family members attending will have the best seat in the stadium, and other friends and relatives can watch a livestream. Students will receive a gown before the event to wear and can keep it as a memento for later pictures and celebrations.

Original Graduation Night Celebration

Keep the original graduation date circled on the calendar and send out those announcement cards! As a tribute to our seniors, skylights will shine in school colors this night above the campus and a custom video for each school's senior class will be released online at the time and date of the school's originally scheduled graduation ceremony. Students and families can create their own custom

watch party that evening with friends and relatives hanging out in online chat rooms and Zoom meetings as you view. The videos are being filmed now and will include all the graduation traditions such as the flag salute, senior speakers, principal comments, student honors, music, photos and the names of the graduating class. It'll be another great opportunity to make the end of the year memorable if you have a graduate in your house or in your neighborhood. (See Page 3 for schedule and celebration ideas.)

Full Ceremonies in July

Delayed ceremonies will occur on July 27 and 28 at the Save Mart Center, so long as mass gatherings are allowed. Each of our high schools would celebrate with their own graduation ceremony at a time to be determined during these two days. The indoor venue has been reserved and can provide room for social distancing and also air-conditioning during this very hot part of our summer months. Because of the potential that California's ban on mass gatherings may still be in place by late July, and to allow families enough time to plan for attendance, a decision will be made no later than July 1 if it is necessary to cancel these events. We will be closely working with officials and local public health guidelines in making this determination.

For the latest information on graduation details, visit cUSD.com or your high school's website.

Celebrate original graduation dates! See dates, skylight tribute and watch party ideas. Page 3

INSIDE:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Summer School programs

During these uncertain times, Clovis Unified is committed to providing high-quality educational programs for our students. *Page 3*

SPORTS

BHS water polo player earns award

Buchanan High swimmer and water polo player Caleb Teraoka is the recipient of the 2020 Rene Errotabere Scholarship. *Page 7*

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Making distance learning a success

Over the past two-and-a-half months we, like every other organization in the nation, have had to make decisions that we would have preferred not to make. *Page 5*

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► **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Grading guidelines

Clovis Unified's leadership team released guidance on grading during this time of distance learning. The guidance establishes that for the fourth quarter, elementary students will receive a mark of "Outstanding," "Satisfactory" or "Needs Improvement;" and secondary students will receive letter grades of A, B, C, D or F. Students' actual grades will still be determined by their teacher according to work turned in during distance learning.

The guidelines do acknowledge the unique situation and challenges of off-site learning, and this will be kept in mind as grades are assigned.

Summer School

During these uncertain times, Clovis Unified is committed to providing high-quality educational programs for our students. With this goal in mind, CUSD will offer summer school at the elementary and secondary levels. Just like learning has looked different these past few months, so will summer school. Summer school programs will continue with distance learning, and preparations are currently underway.

Elementary and intermediate summer school will be for students who are at-risk of not promoting to the next grade level. It will be a continuation of this school year.

High school summer school program will be a combination of credit recovery and original credit for those students with impacted schedules. Schools are currently in the process of enrolling students for summer school and contacting parents. If you have questions about your child attending summer school, please contact your school site.

Summer Camps

The many summer sports, arts and recreation camps and activities usually offered by the district are currently on hold.

Decisions will be made soon as to whether they will be allowed. Check for updated details on cUSD.com.

HOME CELEBRATION IDEAS

Nothing **CAN CONTAIN OUR ENTHUSIASM FOR OUR GRADUATES!**

WE ARE encouraging families, neighbors and the community to get your celebratory ideas going for your student's original graduation night. Here's a few we have heard, and we encourage you to share yours on your school's social media. Let's make sure the Class of 2020 knows how much we all care!

- Parents, make the original graduation date a big day! Put streamers in the house. Signs on the garage. Arrange a tribute on a table to your graduate using school pictures, awards and memorabilia from kindergarten through now.
- Wake up your senior with "Pomp and Circumstance" playing (the graduation march song), along with a favorite breakfast treat. Plan a day of pampering and surprises.
- Mail out announcement cards with an insert that asks relatives to join in watching your graduation video on the night of your originally planned ceremony. Make it a distance party!
- Plan for the entire household to "attend" the watch

**ORIGINAL GRADUATION NIGHT
Have a Watch Party!**

Custom-made videos for each CUSD high school will be released on the school's website by 7:30 p.m., the night of the school's originally scheduled graduation ceremony the same time ceremonies were to start. Also that night, skylights in school colors will shine above the campus as a tribute to our seniors.

Original Graduation Schedule

- May 27, Clovis High
- May 28, Clovis East High
- May 30, Clovis Online School
- June 1, Alternative Education
- June 2, Clovis West High
- June 3, Buchanan High
- June 4, Clovis North High



- Email teachers and invite them to "drop in" on your Zoom party.
- Make it a virtual potluck. Create a theme. Get your Zoom visitors to play along. Personalize it to your graduate.
- Play your school's alma mater or fight song, available on school websites.
- Have a graduation march! Crank up "Pomp and Circumstance" again and have your cap-and-gown-wearing senior walk a path in the house and yard to your cheers. Better yet, add a short walk in the neighborhood at a planned time so neighbors can come to their front steps and celebrate!

party. Have your senior wear the cap and gown, and the rest of the family should dress up, too. Have favorite appetizers, sparkling cider or dessert ready.

■ Encourage other friends and relatives watching with you online also to gather virtually together on Zoom or an online chat room so you can talk with one another. Encourage these guests to have festive items, too, that they can hold up – think noise makers (first time ever you can have noise makers at a CUSD graduation!), balloons, pom-poms and signs.

Neighbors:

Show your support by decorating your yard. How about tying school colors on trees, making celebratory signs or writing the graduate's name in chalk on the sidewalk?

Community:

Paint the town red! And gold! And blue! Put up streamers or ribbons in school colors on the dates of the original graduations. Buchanan Bears, red and blue; Clovis Cougars, blue and gold; Clovis East Timberwolves, navy, silver and green; Clovis North Broncos, Columbia blue, black and silver; Clovis West Golden Eagles, cardinal and gold; Alternative Education Eagles, green and gold; and Clovis Online Chargers, navy and green.

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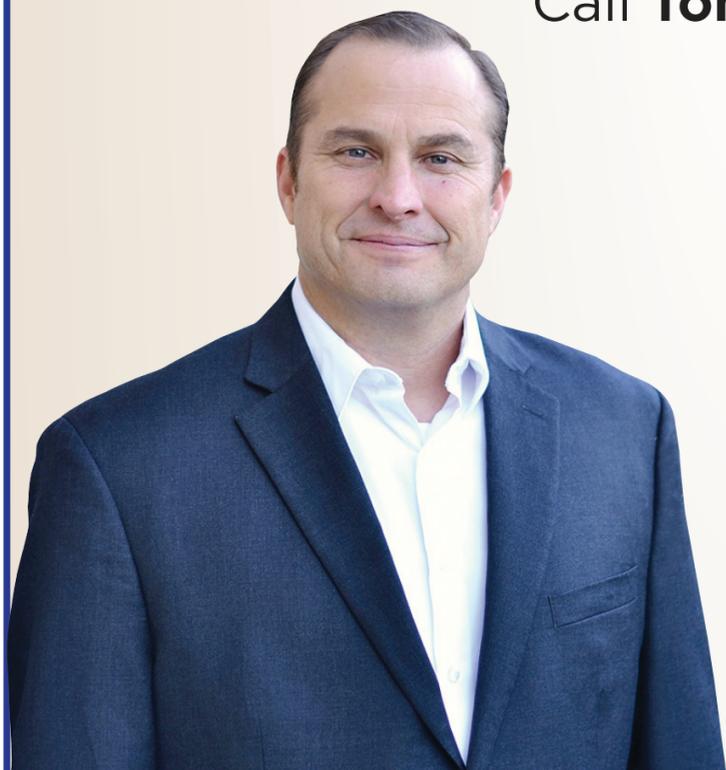
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Clovis Unified juniors honored for tenacity

By Sara Almaraz
Foundation for Clovis Schools

“He has overcome so many challenges.”
“She’s a true grit girl.”
“He is never going to give up.”

These and many similar phrases were used throughout the evening when describing the perseverance of 17 Clovis Unified high school juniors at the 2020 Students of Promise Scholarship and Awards Gala held in early March.

The annual Academy Awards-style event, hosted by the Foundation for Clovis Schools, honored the group of remarkable students who were nominated earlier in the school year by faculty and staff and later selected by the Foundation’s board of directors for their tenacity and courage. The students were showered with accolades, as their captivating stories of determination and strength of mind were shared throughout the evening.

“Some of the Foundation’s most rewarding work lies in honoring our Students of Promise,” said Michael Fennacy, Foundation for Clovis Schools chairperson. “Each year we learn valuable lessons from these students’ extraordinary stories of overcoming adversity.”

In addition to the accolades at the gala, each student is guaranteed a \$2,000 scholarship upon graduation from high school and enrollment in post-secondary education.

“Our foundation is truly privileged to offer the support and encouragement for these students to stay strong through their upcoming sen-

ior year,” Fennacy said. Each honoree has a compelling story – loss of or abandonment by a parent, chronic medical conditions, unusually difficult upbringings, or numerous other challenges – but they all have one thing in common: they continue to thrive despite the odds.

The evening’s featured speaker, McKay Duran, is a 2016 Student of Promise and Clovis North High graduate, studying political science at Fresno State while serving on the City of Fresno Youth Commission, representing the mayor’s office.

Duran’s story of personal triumph parallels the stories of many of the students receiving the recognition this year. He has experienced health issues since birth, which affected some aspects of his educational development and at times, emotional wellness. He shared that, despite missing school to undergo surgeries and procedures addressing his medical needs, he persevered and strove to make his education and involvement in extra-curricular activities his top priorities.

He said that the Student of Promise award is one of the most impactful awards he has received.



Alyssa Burton
Clovis West



Helen Chu
Buchanan



Miguel Covarrubias Conde
Buchanan



Ethan Dussell
Clovis North



Spencer Folsom
Buchanan



Destiny Getchell
Gateway



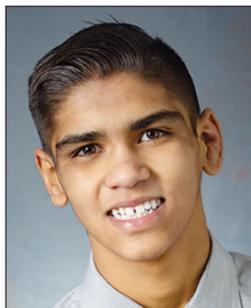
Emma Hamburger
Clovis North



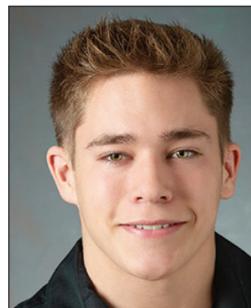
Deema Kashak
Clovis West



Jayden Keller
Clovis West



Raymond Lopez
Buchanan



Dylan McWhorter
Clovis East



Araceli Ramirez
Clovis



Marisa Sanchez
Clovis East



Hallee Jadin Spate
Clovis East



Mai Pang Thao
Clovis East



Ryan Wilder
Gateway



Gianna Wise
Clovis



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Team effort makes distance learning success

By Eimear O'Farrell, Ed.D.
Superintendent

OVER the past two-and-a-half months we, like every other organization in the nation, have had to make decisions that we would have preferred not to make, but which were the right decisions for the time in which we are living. The move to distance learning is one such decision.



Eimear O'Farrell, Ed.D.

For me, this still-unfolding experience has led to a few "aha" moments.

The first came Monday morning after we made the difficult decision to temporarily suspend on-site instruction. Our leadership team had spent the weekend analyzing the thousands of details and decisions that needed to be made quickly to implement distance learning, and our teachers had been told to sit tight and expect more direction by the end of the day Monday.

Within a few minutes of starting our work Monday morning, I was overwhelmed to hear of the number of our grade level and subject matter teams who had also immediately set to work over the weekend to plan out the first phase of learning for their students.

Our teachers immediately took action, and they haven't stopped since. The main work of the district, in the form of student learning, is continuing. And when there was talk out of Sacramento that schools may have to start the 2020-21 school year early to make up for time lost this spring, we were able to reassure our community that Clovis Unified would not need to do so.

From day one of distance learning our team has made the continuation of education for our children a priority. In Clovis Unified, students continue to receive the new instruction needed to be ready to progress to the next grade level or their post-secondary education on time, and we are already planning

how we will meet the unique needs of every student in the upcoming school year.

Which leads to me to my next assurance: our students are worthy of our high expectations.

We have lived by a long-standing belief that if you set high standards for students and believe in their

ability to achieve those standards, that kids can live up to those expectations. Whether it was Clovis West's Carter Williams performing backyard harp concerts to uplift her neighbors, or Reyburn's Bryce Stover, the Buchanan Bird Brains or Clovis North's robotics teams using 3-D printers to make masks

for healthcare workers, or Clovis High's Sarah Azzarello's fun parody to make us laugh, our students have impressed me.

Since March, I have received email after email and heard stories from every one of our communities about students demonstrating that they are worthy of our confidence. Distance learning isn't easy, and I have said repeatedly that our approach to education since March has been a balance of rigor and grace toward our students who are responding to and staying engaged with their teachers.

My final certainty involves our families.

Each May here in Clovis Unified, we celebrate employee appreciation month to recognize the team of people who work to support our children in their education. This year we have an entire new "adjunct faculty" team – our parents! I have always known that our families care about their children's success, and I have been in communication with so many of our families who are doing their best to support their kids, juggle their own work, and manage the anxieties facing all of us during this unprecedented time.

Just as we transitioned to a whole new way of doing business, you did too. We're all in this new thing called "distance learning" together.

Since March, we have had to make many decisions to keep our aim number one – Maximizing the Achievement of ALL Students – aim number one. As I reflect back on these decisions, I know that we have not been perfect in our execution, but we have been consistent in keeping Clovis Unified's core values and our primary purpose of educating our students front and center. It has been a team effort, and I would not want to be on any other team than this one.

Together, we can do this!

LESSONS

Inspirations by, for and from our CUSD students

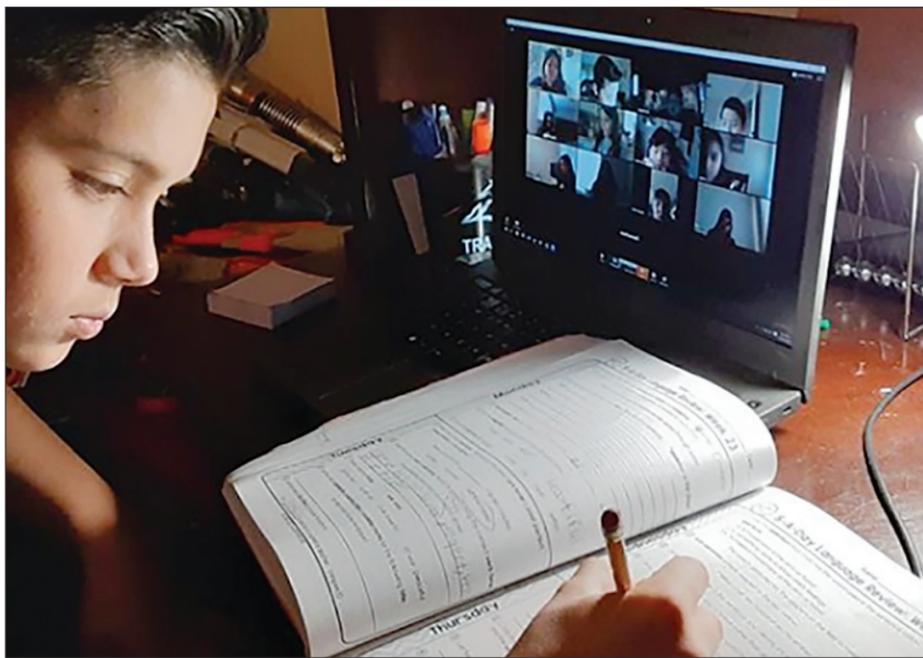


Photo special to CUSD Today by Ron Webb.

We are so proud of our Clovis Unified teachers and students, like Mountain View Elementary student Luke Patla, who continue to work hard to learn and stay connected during this time of distance learning. Clovis Unified has a great team and great students who have been resourceful and resilient to adjust in these challenging times. We believe their perseverance and grit provide great hope for a bright future. Together, we've got this!

"Believe you can and you are halfway there!"

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, 26TH UNITED STATES PRESIDENT

Crystal Award winners show Clovis Unified at its best

Thirty exceptional Clovis Unified employees were honored with a Crystal Award, the district's highest employee recognition, at an event earlier this year. The following is the final part in a series profiling recipients using excerpts from the award videos. A full list and videos are on cusd.com.

By Kathleen Coates
Special to CUSD Today



Andrea Melton
Liberty Elementary Campus
Club Lead Instructor

Expert Organizer

Andrea Melton, Campus Club Lead Instructor at Liberty Elementary, is the definition of going above and beyond.

Nominators said she "goes over the top" to deliver for students, from after-school homework help to big summer events.

Melton not only engages her Campus Club students, but she also engages with parents and the community to foster a climate of trust and respect. As the lead at the Copper Hills summer program, Melton took the initiative to invite a famous author and poet who conducted a workshop during summer campus club. She then invited parents to come that evening to enjoy a poetry jam where students recited the poems they had written during the workshop and everyone enjoyed some pizza.

Melton also involves students in projects for the good of the community, such as annual Thanksgiving and Christmas food drives for Central Valley Veterans through the Campus Club Junior Leadership. She nurtures students' spirit through her everyday kindness and flair. Melton creates monthly themes, sports activities and parties for holidays and the Super Bowl.

Danny Munster

Clovis West Transition Specialist

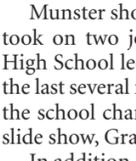
Life Saver & Superior Juggler

In his job as Clovis West Area transition coordinator, Danny Munster provides guidance and support for students needing a little help transitioning from one school level to

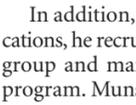


another. He does a superior job at making sure each child has what is needed to succeed in school and in life.

Munster has an innate ability to get to know and assist special education and all students and remember their interests and challenges and their names. Through the SOAR program, he and his team go to physical education classes to connect with students, even running the track to help kids shave time off their mile runs.



Munster showed he was also a superior juggler when he took on two jobs at once. A resignation at Clovis West High School led him to also serve as activities director for the last several months of the school year. Munster planned the school charity fashion show, a spring rally, the senior slide show, Grad Nite and the graduation ceremony.

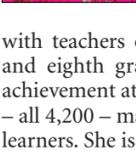


In addition, when it came time for student leader applications, he recruited underserved students from his transition group and many of them became part of the leadership program. Munster puts his students first.

Jeri Olson
Clovis East Math Teacher

The Perfect Equation

As chairwoman of the Clovis East High Math Department, Jeri Olson has taken it upon herself to serve all teaches and all students, not just the students in her classes.



Through tireless research, working with teachers on new strategies and going into seventh and eighth grade classes, Olson has improved student achievement at all levels. She truly cares that every student – all 4,200 – maximizes achievement, especially struggling learners. She is a master of her craft.

Olson has pushed teachers out of their comfort zone by providing a psychological safe zone where she motivates rather than deflates. And she has credibility because she is the first to put new strategies or systems into action in her own classroom and have other teachers observe. Jeri holds after-hour labs and is available at lunch time.

One of those techniques is showing teachers how to hold data chats and set goals with students so they both

can identify gaps in learning and improve on them.

When Olson was approached by Clovis Community College to design a course of fourth-year math for seniors, she was all in. She took time outside her regular duties to build a syllabus, determine curriculum and complete a new course outline.



Sally Palermo
CI&A Senior
Administrative Assistant

Our PLC Ambassador

"Phenomenal!" That is the one word the school leadership senior administrative team uses to describe their colleague, Sally Palermo. And they are not alone in their praise as people can't say enough about

this 23-year Clovis Unified employee. She the senior administrative assistant for the Curriculum, Instruction and Accountability Department, which is housed in the Professional Learning Center, or PLC.

She is known for her efficiency. To improve communications, she partnered with the Communications and Technology departments to integrate three calendar systems into one web-based version. Together with her team, Sally often schedules as many as 1,000 visitors a week to the PLC.

Because of her professional expertise, Palermo served on seven candidate-interview panels this year. She gathered and put together a display honoring former superintendent, the late "Doc" Buchanan. But it is her ability to foster a climate of respect through relationships that gave her the informal title of "PLC Ambassador."

When Special Education Department employees also were situated in the building, she sought to make them feel welcome through invitations to social gatherings and events. Her warmth and support is just who Palermo is. She's the one who delivers food to a sick employee or puts little gifts on co-workers' desks.

Palermo's efforts improved the working environment in the department, as shown by the district's department survey that rose from 40% to 75% being "a great deal" satisfied with conditions.

➤ Please see Awards, Page 9

— ABOUT US —

CUSD Today, Clovis Unified's good news publication, is sent directly to the homes of all CUSD parents and staff, as well as district supporters. In an effort to unify the CUSD community, the newspaper highlights the achievements of Clovis Unified students and staff; profiles new and updated Governing Board policies; and shares general news and information happening within the district.

Circulation: 34,000.

Funding: All costs associated with producing, printing and mailing CUSD Today are entirely funded by our advertisers. To show your appreciation of their support, we ask you to consider patronizing these businesses and services as the need arises.

Story submissions: Please submit all ideas to the Site Coordinator at your school. Please contact your school to find out who your Site Coordinator is. Editorial deadlines are two weeks before the publication date. We do our best to include as many submissions in each issue as our editorial space will allow.

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Photo special to CUSD Today.

Music strums from Clovis West student Carter Williams' harp from her backyard that faces Woodward Lake.

Soothing sounds

Clovis West High sophomore Carter Williams, like many Clovis Unified students, has been doing her part to help the community during these challenging times. Carter is an accomplished harpist. Since the stay at home order was placed in March, she began holding an hour-long concert in her backyard, which faces Woodward Lake.

"I thought it would be fun to surprise the people as they walk around the lake by playing for them," Carter says. "Hopefully it makes people's day better when they hear me playing some of my favorite songs."

Not only are her neighbors enjoying the calming sounds, but others in boats on the lake are setting their anchor so they can relax and listen as well.

CAE nursing graduation

CUSD's Clovis Adult vocational nursing staff surprised its 23 students completing the 18-month program with a video graduation tribute during the final class Zoom meeting April 27. The four-minute long video features photos of each graduate and their own words of thanks, the student speech, pictures of their learning experiences and a photo of their LVN pins and flowers that would have been present had they been able to gather for the traditional graduation.

"We are very proud of our nursing graduates who never stopped pursuing their dream of becoming a nurse during the pandemic crisis," said instructor Chun Hee McMahon, noting many of the students are between 29-35 years old, immigrants, ESL or minorities.

Said speaker Lupy Tejada, "We made the commitment to ourselves, our supporters and our future patients to help and to influence good within those we interact with to build a better community."

The full video can be found on the Clovis Adult School's Facebook page.

BHS robotics award

Many Clovis Unified competitive teams faced great disappointments as several academic, sports and art competitions were cancelled due to gathering restrictions since March 13. The Buchanan Bird Brains robotics team was among them, but the team received some good news in early May. The 70-member team was recognized with the Chairman's Award for the Monterey Regional FIRST Robotics, the most prestigious award that honors the team that best embodies the purpose and goals of robotics. Since the competitions were canceled this year, the Chairman's Award was given by judges based on the essays the team submitted.

Miramonte support

Miramonte Elementary continued to teach character to its students by showing the community its care. The staff and students put together a care package for health care first responders that included cards,

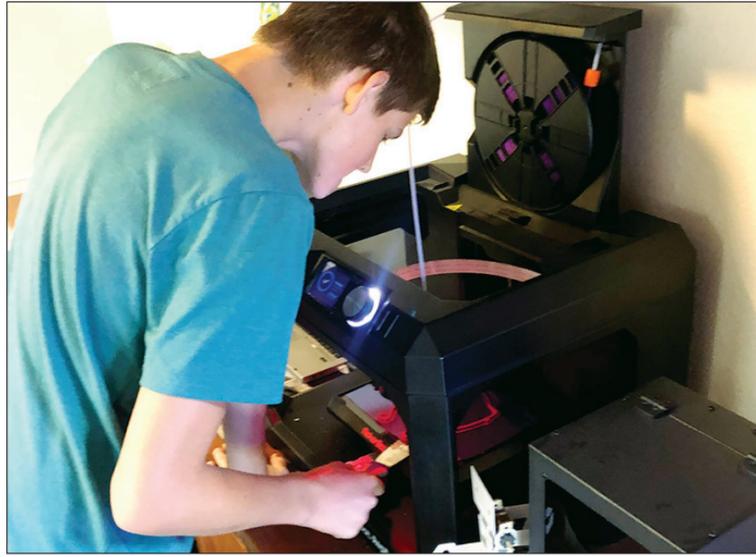


Photo special to CUSD Today.

Reyburn Intermediate student Bryce Stover uses his 3-D printer to make protective face visors that he is donating to a local hospital.

Reyburn student 3-D prints visors

Bryce Stover is a Reyburn Intermediate student who found a way to help during the COVID-19 outbreak and the medical supply shortage. He has been 3-D printing protective face visors for medical personnel and donating them to Saint Agnes Medical Center. He had delivered 50 by early April and planned to create at least 100.

Bryce likes engineering and 3-D designing. He has helped his family with volunteer work at the hospital before, as his mom has a certified therapy dog who makes regular visits. During the pandemic, Bryce wanted to help and found design plans online how to print the visor bands for face shields. Once he got the green light from Saint Agnes that they would be acceptable, he began to create the visors. Each one takes about two hours to create.

"The staff has been very grateful, and it has been heartwarming that my little action has made a big difference," Bryce said.

"His printer has been going non-stop for several weeks," said his mom, Nadine Stover. "He realizes that this is important and every single face shield he makes could be the extra layer of protections that is needed for the people working in the medical field that literally could save a life."

snacks and drinks. They put together a Zoom video presentation that can be seen on the school's Facebook page. "Thank you," students said, "for being the helpers and heroes that we look to."



Photo special to CUSD Today.

Clovis East's Medical Career Pathway class students are doing community service, such as making masks.

CE community service

Dr. Kelly Eichmann who teaches the Patient Care Pathway class at Clovis East High School not only re-directed many of her class assignments to understanding the pandemic and its impact on the health industry, but she has also created a Community Service Task Force for her students wanting to find ways serve the community during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Her students did not disappoint. Several of them got involved and have sewn masks and given them to local hospitals, made donations of blood and written encouraging messages for isolated residents.

"When they begin to look outside of themselves and serve, not only do they feel better about themselves, but they also have a better outlook for the future," Eichmann said.

Mickey Cox donation

Students at Mickey Cox Elementary donated 14,715 items in its Fourth Annual "Soup-er" Bowl Food Drive held earlier this year. The generous offering was more than 5,000 more items collected than last year. Dozens of boxes were filled with cans of soups, vegetables, sauces, pasta and more, and were delivered to the Poverello House and to the Ronald McDonald House.

The food drive not only assists the local

community, but also is designed to encourage students to help others. The top two donating classes – Shelby Goddard's third grade class and Michelle Houston's fifth grade class – receive "Soup-er" Bowl Ring Pops and a perpetual trophy to be displayed until next year's drive.

CN medical delegate

Clovis North freshman Lauren Falcon was named as a delegate for the Congress of Future Medical Leaders that was planned to be held in late June in Boston. The Congress is an honors-only program for high school students who want to become physicians or go into medical research fields.



Law college gives books

When Young Elementary opens for the first time this fall, the library will have a great start to its collection thanks to a generous donation of children's books from the San Joaquin College of Law.

The law school collected 1,182 books through its annual Elizabeth O'Neill Book Drive for the new Clovis Unified school that is currently under construction in southeast Fresno.

The college staff and students have held the collection drive and donated books to Clovis Unified schools since 2009, with this year's total beating all of its previous records. Past recipients have included Reagan, Miramonte, Cole, Mountain View, Boris, Jefferson, Sierra Vista, Pinedale, Temperance-Kuttner, Lincoln, Nelson, Fancher Creek, Weldon and Tarpey elementary schools.

Young Principal Kacey Gibson and office manager Melanie Allen picked up the first 1,001 books in March, and the remaining books will be delivered when the shelter in place concludes. Also contributing to the donations were the Fig Garden Friends of the Library that contributed more than 300 books.

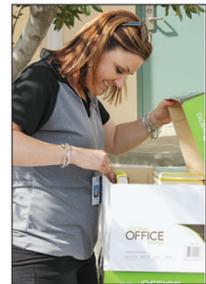


Photo special to CUSD Today.

Young Elementary Principal Kacey Gibson peeks at some of the books donated to the new library.



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Photo special to CUSD Today by Ron Webb.
Buchanan High's Caleb Teraoka is the Rene Errotabere Scholarship recipient. Other finalists are Grant Lake, Clovis High; Tyler Parker, Clovis East; Kelton Lindsey, Clovis North; and Melania Scanlan, Clovis.

BHS water polo player earns Errotabere award

Buchanan High swimmer and water polo player Caleb Teraoka is the recipient of the 2020 Rene Errotabere Scholarship, named after a beloved Clovis Unified administrator who died in 2004.

The memorial tribute was set up to honor Errotabere's never-give-up attitude, and it is presented yearly to an athlete who has been found to be excellent in mind, body and spirit by a committee made up of the namesake's family and co-workers.

Teraoka, who had leukemia as a child, will study nursing and play water polo in the fall at Cal Baptist University. He was among five finalists nominated by their school and interviewed by the committee. Finalists were celebrated on a Zoom call

May 1 in which the winner of the award and \$2,500 scholarship was named.

Finalists receive a \$500 scholarship and they are:

- Grant Lake, Clovis High, football, volleyball, track, basketball and soccer

- Tyler Parker, Clovis East, baseball

- Kelton Lindsey, Clovis North, swim and water polo

- Melania Scanlan, Clovis



West, soccer and volleyball
"You have all shown that you have developed resiliency, perseverance and tenacity, which will serve you well in your futures," said Superintendent Eimear O'Farrell to the five standout students. "Rene would have been so proud."

► SPORTS BRIEFS

Football All-Stars

The Fresno City-County All-Star Football game may have been cancelled due to coronavirus, but that does not take away the prestigious recognition for several Clovis Unified players who were named to team rosters because of their talent and accomplishments. According to the event's website, the players selected represent the best of the Valley and were hand chosen by coaches to have played in the annual all-star game. Congratulations to these young men.

Included on the City's Team roster were Tanner Ewell, Clovis West, linebacker; Roman Rodriguez, Clovis North, running back; and Brandon Wafer, Clovis West, running back.

Representing CUSD on the County's Team roster were Godofredo Aguilar, Clovis East, outside linebacker; Blake Baldwin, Clovis East, inside linebacker; Byron Fountain, outside linebacker; Chandler Hamilton, Clovis East, defensive back; Garrett Harris, Clovis, offensive guard; C.J. Jones, Buchanan, defensive back; Grant Lake, Clovis, wide receiver; Matt Merritt, Buchanan, defensive end; Zane Rix, Buchanan, nose tackle; Isaiah Robles, Clovis, quarterback; Jonah Schmidtke, Clovis East, nose guard/defensive tackle; and Zach Studt, Buchanan, defensive tackle.

Junior League scholarships

Five Clovis Unified female student athletes were among 24 high school seniors recognized in the Fresno area by the Junior League of Fresno for their combined achievement in athletics, academics and citizenship.

Each honoree is presented with a scholarship and a plaque.

The 2020 honorees include Emily Cazares, Buchanan; Avery Evans, Clovis; Elizabeth Naranjo, Clovis East; Heather Ayerza, Clovis North; and Ashlyn Brosi, Clovis West.

Athlete signings

Congratulations to several Clovis Unified student athletes who recently signed National Letters of Intent to play sports at colleges this fall.

They are:

Buchanan

McKenna Cheny, track and field, Northern Arizona University; Kelsey McKenney, water polo, Fresno State; Corie Smith, track and field, University of Arkansas; Mia Jau-regui, track and field, Fresno State; Ronnie Barrett, track and field, Fresno State; Logan Gioffre, wrestling, Cal Poly SLO; Charlie Barnes, basketball, Carroll College; Jaidon Padua, volleyball, Menlo College; Hunter Leake, wrestling, Cal Baptist University.

Clovis

Josh Dela Cruz, football, Briar Cliff College; Miles Henderson, baseball, Masters University; Jonathon Johnson, football, Northwest Oklahoma State; Sam Johnson, volleyball, Graceland University; Isabelle Knittle, water polo, University of Pacific; MaKayla McMahon, gymnastics, San Jose State University; Justin Mouritsen, wrestling, Western Colorado University; Kim Tovar, cross country/track and field, CSU Monterey; Sean Williamson, soccer, CSU Dominguez Hills.

Clovis East

Ashley Gardner, soccer, Fresno Pacific University; Gino Helmuth, baseball, Fresno Pacific University; Mackenzie Madron, soccer, Fresno Pacific University; Elizabeth Naranjo, track, Fresno Pacific University; Tyler Parker, baseball, Fresno Pacific University; Josh Sue, baseball, La Sierra University.

Clovis North

Brock Goerlich, soccer, California Lutheran University; Morgan Moffitt, softball, Briar Cliff University; Joshua Ochoa, track and field, UC Irvine; Ryan O'Hara, baseball, UC Davis.

Clovis West

Brayden Costales, cross country/track and field, Fresno Pacific University; Jessica Drake, basketball, Methodist University; Parker Fife, water polo, UC Irvine; Jack Fitzpatrick, water polo, Iona College; Morgan Ford, volleyball, Hendrix College; Megan Nabors, cross country/track and field, Marymount California University; Olivia Renfro, cross country/track and field, San Francisco State; Felipe Rodriguez, wrestling, Cal Baptist University.

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Exceptional friends to special ed students

By CUSD Special Education

Clovis Unified's Community Advisory Committee announced 13 winners of this year's 2019-20 Exceptional Person Awards. The award recognizes staff, students and volunteers in the Clovis Unified School District who have shown extraordinary work with and for students with special needs. The winners are making a difference in students lives in how they teach, support and encourage special education children.

The winners were selected from more than 100 nominations submitted by parents, students, staff and administrators. This year because of the coronavirus restrictions, the award event could not be held, however winners were notified in grand fashion through drive-by parades, signs and Zoom-bombs.

Winners receive their nomination letters and a commemorative plaque thanks to the generous donations made by various school parent clubs and foundations.

Congratulations to the following honorees:

Buchanan Area



Karen Babcock
Instructional Assistant II
Garfield Elementary/
Special Education Center

"Respectful, compassionate, advocating for those who have no voice and easing the mind of parents, supporting her coworkers and team members. I couldn't think of a better person to have this honor." – L.V. (Parent)

"Karen is the kindest human I have ever met. She brings a level of comfort to our students at the Garfield Center that is unmatched." – Samantha Grijalva, LVN



Sandra Hajjaj
Licensed Vocational
Nurse, Garfield
Elementary/Special
Education Center

"Nurse Sandra Hajjaj is more than just a nurse, she is a blessing to the students in her care and the people that are lucky enough to work with her." – Tanika Mason, ATP Teacher

"I have never met someone so dedicated and hardworking. She loves each child in class like her very own and you can clearly see it. All the children in class adore her." – A.R., parent

Clovis East Area



Chue Youa Lor
Instructional Assistant II
Boris Elementary

"Chue has a natural intuition for working with students with special needs, especially preschoolers. She uses the right balance of accountability of expectations and loving compassion to help every student succeed to their highest potential" – Gabby Castillo, SLP

"Chue has established wonderful rapport with each student showing compassion and integrity. It starts each morning when she greets them with a warm smile and a high five and continues throughout the day...." Jennifer Mersino, PALS Teacher



Xavier Ramirez
Teacher, Clovis East High

"All the students know that Xavier will do anything for them, and yet at the same time holds each student accountable and expects the best out of them. His work ethic and attention to detail is exceptional as well as his compassion and always doing what is best to prepare the students for the real world. ... The staff and the students know that Xavier will always do what is best for the student and is their # 1 advocate for them." – Whitney Swillis, Program Specialist

"What makes her exceptional is how she approaches her role and responsibilities with her assigned student. Megan is willing to think outside of the box in order to engage her students." – Cathy Dodd, Principal

Clovis High Area



Megan Erickson
Instructional Assistant II
Sierra Vista Elementary

"I have full faith and trust in Megan's decisions when it comes to my son because I know she only wants what's best for him, and I can't explain how much I love her for that." – C.E., parent

"Kids always ask to go to Russell's room, just to say hi or to let him know how good their day was. ... His impact at Red Bank is



Russell Halterman
Teacher
Red Bank Elementary

"What I love and admire most about Jessica is her humbleness and, above all, her integrity. Jessica is the kind of teacher who every student will remember and think of fondly, because she took the time to get to know them, hold them accountable and support them every step of the way. The care and dignity that Jessica shows her students is what every parent and administrator hopes for in a teacher." – Monica Everson, Principal

huge to our program, as kids work and thrive to be a better Bobcat, and a lot of it starts, with our Exceptional Person Mr. Halterman!" – Nick Gonzalez, IA IV

"He provides a stable caring learning environment that all students need to grow in character, learn academics and become the best version of themselves." – Paula Vived, GIS



Dianne McCrain
Teacher, Clark Intermediate

"Diane McCrain is the type of special education teacher who has the unique qualities of see past the student's DISABILITIES and looks at the student's ABILITIES. She has a gift of teaching the students to their full potential." – B.V., parent

"She enjoys the challenge of finding the individual learning styles of each of her students and creating opportunities to present the material in the manner that best reaches each student." – D.P., parent

Clovis North Area



Susan Bairstow
Teacher
Copper Hills Elementary

"As the team leader, Susan set the standard for the meeting, communicating well in advance the goals that would be discussed and the people that would be in attendance. There was nothing that was not discussed during the meeting and I was given all the time I needed to ask questions and get answers. ... Copper Hills has set the bar high for my expectations of special education and that is the result of the work and character of Susan Bairstow." – A.S., parent



Jessica Hatameria
Teacher
Mountain View Elementary

"What I love and admire most about Jessica is her humbleness and, above all, her integrity. Jessica is the kind of teacher who every student will remember and think of fondly, because she took the time to get to know them, hold them accountable and support them every step of the way. The care and dignity that Jessica shows her students is what every parent and administrator hopes for in a teacher." – Monica Everson, Principal

Clovis West Area



Melissa Perez
Teacher, Liberty Elementary

"She is the teacher that literally gives her students the sweater off her back when they come to school without one on a cold day. I could not think of anyone

more deserving." – Elvira Frantz, School Psychologist

"She has such a positive and selfless attitude, and this shows in the difference she is making in so many students' lives every day. When they leave her class at the end of the day, they are assured that she believes in them." – Ashley Ferdinandsen, Student Teacher



Kristi Vincent Martinez
Teacher
Valley Oak Elementary

"Kristi has stood out as an understanding and intentional teacher that goes above and beyond to ensure that her students and colleagues are supported" – Mikayla Sawatzky, SDC Teacher

"Kristi is a strong leader and role model with a huge heart. She promotes the values of diversity, acceptance and belonging." – Karlina Osburn, IA II

District Wide



Derek Kennedy
Bus Driver, Transportation

"Derek Kennedy is one of the greatest supporters I know of children with special needs. I want to thank Mr. Kennedy for all his support and love he shows for the kiddos he works with." – Melissa Perez, SDC Teacher

"Derek never had a bad day or ever showed up without a smile on his face. Derek goes above and beyond the duties of his job every day" – Katie Williams, EIAP Teacher



Nikki Cornell, MPT
Physical Therapist, SPED

"Nikki is a selfless 'warrior' in support of Clovis Unified students. She is a voice for those who cannot explain their pains, movements or actions." – Lisa Keller, A.P.E Specialist

"Nikki makes an IMPACT not an impression on Clovis Unified students. She's focused on her students' well-being and wants them to succeed." – Ben Cazano, A.P.E Specialist



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FROM PAGE 5



Stephanie Patterson
Liberty Elementary Teacher

Genius Teacher

It's not often that your boss calls you a "genius." But that's what Liberty Elementary Principal George Petersen said of fourth grade teacher Stephanie Patterson.

Challenged as she moved from being a kindergarten teacher, Patterson studied research about better teaching strategies and shared her findings with her colleagues. She applied for grants and raised money to buy new furniture and technology for her classroom.

Patterson also supports students outside the classroom. She created a "Welcome to Liberty" program, pairing new students with current ones to enjoy a root beer float and tour of the school. She also started the Valentines for Vets campaign.

But Patterson's real genius is her instructional techniques that involve every student, helping them learn to speak up without fear when they don't understand something. Through "motivational interviewing" students learn to take risks. With the "Two Proofs" strategy, students present two different ways to solve a math problem. Another successful technique, called "Genius Hour," has students investigate a topic of interest while still holding them accountable for reading, writing, research and scientific competencies. Students become self-directed learners.

The innovation has paid off. In 2019, Patterson's student state test scores showed 100% on grade level in both English Learning Achievement and math, including struggling learners.



Crystal Rodriguez
Clovis Adult Education GLS

Problem Solver

Guidance and Learning Specialist at the Clovis Adult Education Department, Crystal Rodriguez is the only counselor responsible for the academic progress of

2,500 students.

Rodriguez created an efficient enrollment process and converted student records to an electronic-based system. Crystal makes sure every person she meets with has an educational plan and understand what they need to do to earn a diploma.

She developed a system in which college transition counselors have an office on the Clovis Adult campus so they can guide students through the process of finding and applying to a college. As a result, the number of Clovis Adult students who applied to college increased 10-fold. She is relentless in searching for resources to help her students succeed, even seeing to medical needs and helping them find jobs and shelter.

Rodriguez attends events at elementary schools, community events and career fairs to promote the academic and ESL programs for parents at Clovis Adult. Sometimes adult education students have emotional, financial or family issues. Rodriguez helps them feel good about completing their high school education by getting a GED. And she goes out of her way to partner with community groups such as the Marjaree Mason Center and ATR Associates for personal counseling services.



Ella Shasky
Dry Creek Resource Specialist

Champion of Students

Dry Creek Elementary School Resource Specialist Ella Shasky's job is to teach students with disabilities and support classroom teachers in meeting their needs. But Ella does much more – pushing into

general education classes to help other students with issues.

Her impact on campus has been far and wide. She has earned the respect of all at Dry Creek for her dedication, giving up her lunch period to provide support and volunteering at the Movie Nights snack bar.

Her instructional methods have shown incredible results. Before she arrived, 6% of students with disabilities were

proficient in state tests in English Language Arts and 6% in math. Over her three-year tenure those numbers have jumped to 59% and 72%, respectively. How DOES she do it?

Although Shasky's caseload is big enough as it is, she also teaches Panther Time groups in her classroom. Panther Time provides reteaching and enrichment lessons. Volunteering in this way has shown reduced class sizes for intervention, removed a stigma associated with RSP and has promoted success for all.



Jose L. Vargas
Clovis North Educational Center Assistant Director of Bands

Selfless Winner

Founding Clovis Unified superintendent Dr. Floyd Buchanan would say, "If you want to be a winner, surround yourself with winners." Clovis North Educational Center Assistant Director of Bands Jose Vargas is just such a winner.

Vargas holds both himself and his students to high standards, and they both consistently outperform other music groups in the state. He does this through caring encouragement and individual, practical instruction that makes students want to participate in his programs. He maintains an 80% retention rate among incoming ninth graders. He has built up the Granite Ridge Intermediate band program from 50 to 180 students over his time there.

Vargas starts his passions for student musicians early – he routinely reaches out to elementary sites, working with band articulation in the early grades. By doing so, Vargas builds a safety net where elementary students feel safe going to the next level of music in intermediate school.

The school's Symphonic Band, under Vargas' leadership, has scored all superior ratings at every festival for the past eight years. This band was the only middle school group invited to perform at a recent state music educators' convention.



Manuel Vigil
Reagan Educational Center Lead Custodian

Efficient to a Fault

Reagan Educational Center Lead Custodian Manuel Vigil is always there to smooth things over to keep the school running so learning can continue. He is dedicated to the REC, making sure school grounds are clean and teachers have the supplies, desks and chairs they need. He goes out of his way, even on days off, before and after school, to accomplish these tasks. He is highly respected and viewed as a mentor.

During a community survey, 97% of respondents agreed that the building and grounds at Clovis East are well maintained. Students note his hard work in surveys.

But he does so much more. He has helped students individually, like fixing a broken bike or welcoming a new Spanish-speaking student. He comes up with solutions to nagging problems, such as delivering teachers' instructional materials each summer in a more efficient manner.



Erin Waer
Boris Elementary Principal

Bold 21st Century Vision

Boris Elementary opened in 2016 and Principal Erin Waer strove to create a learning environment at the new school based on the Partnership for 21st Century Learning. Since then, under her guidance, the school has become a model for Clovis Unified and other districts.

Waer started with staff development to get across her vision of a working environment where students learn skills needed to succeed in education and to become productive members of the community. Teachers learned about Maker Space – giving students time to collaborate. Waer was first in the district to introduce flexible seating to allow for different ways of learning.

With Waer's vision, and other programs like The Positivity Project and its "People Matter" mantra, incoming students learned skills of self-control, bravery and perseverance. At Boris, the library offers a chance to interact with robots, STEM projects are underway in the halls and Folklorico and Bhangra dance troupes create cultural awareness and an inclusive environment.

What is the result of all this innovative thinking and getting the staff to go all in?

State scores in English Language Arts showed 68% growth compared to 55% districtwide in 2018-19.



Steve Ward
Legislative Analyst & Government Relations

Advocate Extraordinaire

Steve Ward, Clovis Unified's legislative analyst and governing relations guru, is one of those humble employees who works behind the scenes, often on his own time. He produces impactful results.

The 43-year-long district employee has always had an eye toward leading innovations and building partnerships that benefit students. He never seeks credit.

His job is advocating on a state and federal level for

greater education funding. Most notably, Ward created the School Funding Coalition, reaching out to other districts throughout California. More than 45 districts joined, and the coalition has been effective, resulting in millions of additional dollars for students statewide.

In addition, Ward makes sure the district is sound financially and oversees the Benefits Committee. Because of his concern about the rising cost of health care, he worked to establish Clovis Unified's Health Center, a medical clinic for employees through the district's self-insurance program. Employees owe no co-pays and are kept healthy and at their jobs.

Most recently Ward helped negotiate new contracts with physical therapy services, saving the district more than \$600,000.



Erika Whitney
Child Development Preschool Program Supervisor

Preschool Cheerleader

Described as a teacher who does whatever it takes to accomplish maximum achievement for students, district Child Development Department preschool supervisor Erika Whitney leads the way in bringing innovative concepts to all teachers.

For example, Whitney created a system to engage the whole family in each child's learning. Her initiative, "literacy backpacks" for preschoolers has been a smashing success. Each student receives a backpack with a book, a stuffed animal and a suggested family activity. Parents and kids alike were excited to take part, creating not just quality family time, but also learning opportunities for the youngsters.

Another concept Whitney introduced this year was called "Loose Parts." For this, she had learning centers put together with found objects that children could move and change while they played. As children manipulated items like beads, bottle caps, rocks and leaves, they were also acquiring first math skills, social skills and learning concepts. The skills strengthen kindergarten readiness and the children loved doing the activities. With the help of others, she created 75 learning centers to be distributed to other preschool teachers and she followed up with teachers to help how she could.

Whitney also founded the Outdoor Classroom, conducting workshops in over 50 examples of this strategy.

Christine Williams
Mountain View Teacher



A Cut Above

Mountain View Elementary transitional kindergarten/kindergarten combination class teacher Christine Williams is described in her nomination as simply "a cut above."

She puts Mountain View students' progress above all else. For example, when she wanted to start an extended-day kindergarten at the school, her principal told her there were no extra resources to do that. Instead, Williams gave up her prep time two days a week in order to hold extended days of instruction for students who needed it.

Williams had an innovative idea to begin teaching reading at the start of school and not wait until her kindergartners had mastered their phonics. She also included her colleagues' lowest readers and included English Language learners. She taught reading and phonics concurrently and achieved great results with scores the highest Mountain View had seen in Kindergarten and first grade in years.

She volunteered to undergo Math Camp training, representing the Clovis North Area, and shared innovations she learned with teachers at all grade levels.

David "Keith" Williams
Gateway High Teacher



Self-starter

Gateway High School teacher David "Keith" Williams knows alternative education students require resources and interventions, and he goes out of his way to connect students with the services they need to be a success. The retired San Francisco Giants player has spent his entire 10-year education career at Gateway and is a proponent of service learning.

A proponent of service learning, Williams has involved students in the community to create a sense of pride and ownership. Projects have included building bikes for 20 children in need and sorting and packing foods for low-income families at the annual P-and-R Farms food bank drive.

His enthusiasm knows no bounds. He co-created a class – Beginning Broadcasting – and teaches US history, computer applications and credit recovery. In the classroom he uses a combination of tough love, accountability and fun to help students advance.

He volunteers to coach Gateway's Peer Counseling, Interact Club and E sports. Much of what Williams does, he initiates himself. Because many Gateway students live in group foster homes, he created the "Holiday Hotcakes" event, persuading businesses to donate food for all 250 students, and teachers to come early and cook. For some, this may be their only holiday festivity.

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