

Press Release
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CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNOUNCES 2019 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

Three Local Teachers Recognized During Surprise Classroom Celebrations

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, CA – Three Capistrano Unified School District teachers have been named “2019 Teachers of the Year” for their outstanding commitment to engage *all* students in learning. District officials, school colleagues, friends and family gathered to announce the winners during surprise classroom celebrations on February 4, 2019.

District Board of Trustees President Gila Jones, Trustee Judy Bullockus, Trustee Amy Hanacek, Trustee Patricia Holloway, Trustee Martha McNicholas, Superintendent Kirsten Vital, District Executive Cabinet Members, and Capistrano Unified Education Association President Joy Schnapper were present for the celebrations, and congratulated the winning teachers – Jill Brick, Amanda Hatcher and Ashly Ogden – for their unwavering commitment to student success.

“I am always inspired to recognize the great work of our incredible teachers and the positive impact they have on our students,” said President Jones. “They are wonderful examples of the teachers we have in our District, and we look forward to cheering them on at the County level.”

Below are this year’s honorees:

Elementary School Teacher of the Year: Jill Brick

Jill Brick has been teaching at George White Elementary School since the school first opened its doors 29 years ago. Her goal as an educator is to instill the joy of learning in a safe classroom, while motivating *all* students to strive to become life-long learners. “Every day is a new chance for me to make a difference in someone’s life, every year is a new adventure, every student is a new relationship,” she says.

Mrs. Brick's colleague states the word that best describes her is "passionate." She explains, "I have yet to meet another teacher, or better yet, individual, that beams with such radiant passion. This teacher has a passion to learn, a passion to embed knowledge into young minds, and a passion to make each individual the best person they can possibly be."

Middle School Teacher of the Year: Amanda Hatcher

Amanda Hatcher has taught at Ladera Ranch Middle School since 2014 as a social science teacher. With fifteen years of teaching experience, Mrs. Hatcher states she wants to "continue to grow as an educator and never become stagnant."

As the Peer Assistance Leadership (PAL) advisor, she strives to engage *all* students in leadership development opportunities, empowering them to solve challenges, take on social issues and educate their peers. She is a "complete servant at heart, utilizing her ability, heart, personality and experiences to further the opportunities of her students and professionally support her peers," says Ladera Ranch Middle School Assistant Principal Jim Christensen.

High School Teacher of the Year: Ashly Ogden

Ashly Ogden has been a teacher in Capistrano Unified School District for eight years. During this time, she has taught a variety of courses within special education, and currently teaches general education math at Serra High School.

As the daughter of an educator, she grew up with the awareness that teaching is much more than providing knowledge of a subject matter. She defines teaching as, "leading by example, teaching respect, self-love, appreciation for education, and the drive to find your passion."

Ms. Ogden ensures *all* her students have a strong foundation in math, in a classroom where the subject may feel frustrating or overwhelming. "Her personal mission is to ignite excitement about math," says Serra High School Principal Meg Ervais. She does anything she can to engage students in a challenging subject by joking, dramatizing, and even dancing when needed!

The winning educators were selected as Teacher of the Year by their respective schools before advancing as candidates for the District's 2019 Teacher of the Year honor. The three teachers now advance to the Orange County Teacher of the Year competition later this year.

Pictures and video from the Teacher of the Year surprise visits are available on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CapoUnified/ or by request.

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