

NEWS RELEASE

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2015 Stanislaus County Teachers of the Year Finalists Announced

The Modesto Rotary Club and the Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE) will honor the **2015 Stanislaus County Teachers of the Year Finalists** and announce the selection of four as **2015 Stanislaus County Teachers of the Year** at a Rotary luncheon on **May 5** at the **DoubleTree Hotel** at **noon**. The four selected as Teachers of the Year will each receive a \$1,000 cash award from the Modesto Rotary Club Foundation and a \$700 Nasco gift card. Mocse Credit Union also sponsors the event and provides funding for the awards, decorations and lunch for the student entertainers.

Teachers were nominated by their principals and finalists were selected from 78 nominees representing 17 school districts in Stanislaus County. A selection committee, composed of local Rotarians and educators, narrowed the nominations through a paper screening process and then visited the classrooms of 24 semi-finalists before narrowing it down to the 12 finalists.

The 2015 Teachers of the Year Finalists are:

<u>ELEMENTARY (K-3) LEVEL</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>DISTRICT</u>
Sarah Curry	Summit Charter	Ceres Unified
Lori Guyll	Cloverland Elementary	Oakdale Joint Unified
Elizabeth Pannell	Beaver Elementary	Ceres Unified
<u>ELEMENTARY (4-6) LEVEL</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>DISTRICT</u>
Penny Bartholomew	California Avenue	Riverbank Unified
Andrea Fuentes	Orchard Elementary	Sylvan Union
Matthew Weinheimer	Hughes Elementary	Empire Union
<u>MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>DISTRICT</u>
Aimee Hirsch	Mae Hensley	Ceres Unified
Dan Leitner	Blaker-Kinser	Ceres Unified
Jevon Swanson	Prescott Sr. Elementary	Stanislaus Union

HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

Helen Aleksani

Stephen Dias

Richard Jones

SCHOOL

Waterford High

Ceres High

Del Puerto High

DISTRICT

Waterford Unified

Ceres Unified

Patterson Joint Unified

Again this year, a Civility Award will be presented in honor of former SCOE Assistant Superintendent Jane Johnston, who helped launch the county-wide Choose Civility Initiative in 2010 and passed away unexpectedly in April 2012. Johnston was a member of the Modesto Rotary, co-chaired the Teacher of the Year Program, and was active with the Education Foundation of Stanislaus County. “Jane was an exceptional model of civility at work and in our community,” said Education Foundation Chairperson Pam Denney. “The Education Foundation will once again honor her memory with this annual award.” The **Jane Johnston Civility Award** will be presented to one of the 12 finalists who best exemplifies the principles of civility. The winner of this award will also receive \$1,000.

This is the 17th year that Modesto Rotary and SCOE have joined efforts to honor teachers in Stanislaus County. The program not only honors local teachers and celebrates excellence in education, but also provides an opportunity for teachers to receive state and national recognition. Two of the four Teachers of the Year will be selected, through an interview process, to represent Stanislaus County in the State Teacher of the Year Program. One state winner then proceeds to the national level.

“A good teacher inspires students, ignites imaginations, and instills a love of learning,” said County Superintendent Tom Changnon. “It is truly an honor to partner with the Rotary to recognize these outstanding teachers – each who helps inspire and shape the lives of young students in our county on a daily basis.”

Sponsors of the Stanislaus County Teacher of the Year program include the Modesto Rotary Club Foundation, Stanislaus County Office of Education, Nasco and Mocse Credit Union.

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