Press Release  
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CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNOUNCES MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR  

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO – A surprise visit to Las Flores Middle School by CUSD Board President Amy Hanacek, Board Clerk Martha McNicholas, Trustee Gila Jones, Superintendent Kirsten Vital and Capistrano Unified Educators Association President Sally White was made to announce English Teacher Lisa Hoover as this year’s Middle School Teacher of the Year for the Capistrano Unified School District.

Along with Principal Sean McNamara, the group headed to Hoover’s classroom to share the news with and her students. “It is truly a joy to be here today and to recognize your absolute excellence in teaching,” stated President Hanacek. “For your middle school students, you are each and every day their Teacher of the Year through your unflagging commitment to them and to imparting a quality education always.”

Superintendent Kirsten Vital thanked Hoover for her love and dedication to our middle schoolers. “Middle School can be some very tough years for our children. It’s a transition that can be difficult and that’s why it’s such a blessing to have teachers like you in the classroom. It is clear, by the number of students who have joined us for this celebration, that you make a lasting impact on our young people.”

Now in her 19th year at Las Flores Middle School, Hoover is passionate about literature and the way it impacts lives. She believes that reading opens the doors to new worlds, allowing us to travel beyond the walls of our reality. To help kids discover and explore these worlds, she created a community outreach reading system called “Read Aloud”, a grass roots literature program that is still going strong 16 years later. Students in Hoover’s accelerated and regular English classes conduct monthly read alouds in nearby elementary classrooms. Under her guidance, middle schoolers work in small groups to plan and
practice effective delivery. Preparing for these monthly speaking engagements enhances their organization and presentation skills, while also connecting them to their young listeners. Hoover’s students find it very meaningful to share stories and connect with kids; several Las Flores graduates have started similar reading programs at their respective high schools and charity groups.

In order to be her best, Hoover commits four weeks of every summer to her teaching techniques, attending the UCI Writing Project Conference on Reading and Writing Instruction. She learns from experts in order to ensure that her presentations stay fresh and engaging; these elements are crucial to successful middle school instruction. Hoover’s class management system is another mark of her excellence. Each semester, her students campaign for class leadership positions. Handling daily responsibilities allows students to take ownership of their classroom; they become invested in and committed to its success. Laurie Cummings, fellow teacher and a parent of one of Hoover’s former students describes Lisa Hoover’s room as a “thriving hub of learning.”

In the words of her former principal, Shannon Soto, “She teaches her students to strive for excellence, to love reading, and to respect each other.” This is not an easy task with adolescents. Hoover certainly deserves the label, “CUSD Middle School Teacher of the Year”.

Hoover will represent CUSD at the Orange County Department of Education Teachers of the Year program where four teachers will be selected to move on to the California Department of Education Teacher of the Year program.

Pictures are available on our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/CapoUnified/ or by request.

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