Press Release
For Immediate Release
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CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANNOUNCES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO – A surprise visit to Marian Bergeson Elementary School by CUSD Board President Martha McNicholas, Vice President Gila Jones, Clerk Patricia Holloway, Trustee Amy Hanacek, Superintendent Kirsten Vital and Capistrano Unified Educators Association President Sally White was made to announce Mandarin Immersion Teacher Julie Fong as this year’s Elementary School Teacher of the Year for the Capistrano Unified School District.

The group headed to Fong's classroom to share the news with her and her students. "Julie Fong is one of our fabulous Mandarin Immersion teachers. She brings the world to her classroom,” President Martha McNicholas stated. “She makes sure her students know that they can make a difference. By shaping their young minds and inspiring them while they are learning – and having fun - she gives them the confidence they need to become responsible global citizens and successful leaders.”

Fong began her career teaching in a wealthy private school and went on to spend the next 13 years teaching in South Central Los Angeles. For the past four years she has been teaching Mandarin Immersion at Marian Bergeson Elementary School. Her experience gives her the perspective that no matter a student’s background or economic status, she is a champion for their individual success and empowers them to make a difference and be a positive influence in the world. Her students raised money to buy toys for a student with a serious illness, went into the community to educate them about the prevalence of Malaria in Africa, and made lunches for the homeless in Santa Ana.
"I create tasks and projects where students can learn while having fun,” Fong said. “Sometimes the students don't realize that they're learning because they feel inspired. Knowing that I am helping shape positive, responsible global citizens is the best reward in teaching."

Julie has transformed Bergeson's Mandarin Immersion program by bringing depth to it, exposing students to more than just language but also to classical music, movies and art in Mandarin. Under her guidance, students were selected to participate in a traditional Chinese poetry competition, in the category of Native Speakers, and finished in both 3rd and 5th place out of 700 students competing. Julie makes her students a priority and never fails to take whatever time is needed to help a student having trouble.

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

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