Newport-Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) is pleased to announce the 2017 Classified Employee of the Year Awards Program winners, two of which were selected as Orange County Classified Employees of the Year, and will proceed for consideration at state level.

The Classified Employee of the Year Awards Program recognizes employees that go above and beyond the expectations of their job duties to provide exemplary service to students, families and colleagues.

The 2017 NMUSD Classified Employee of the Year winners are:

- **Karen Allison**, child nutrition (county winner, proceed to state level consideration)
- **Ilse Taborga**, support services and security (county winner, proceed to state level consideration)
- **Pam Saunders**, office and technical
- **Emma Tyaransen**, para-educator/ Instructional Assistant
- **Olga Sandoval**, transportation

“We are extremely proud of our classified staff and the amazing work that they do to ensure the success of our students,” said NMUSD Superintendent Dr. Fred Navarro. “Congratulations to all of our 2017 classified employees, thank you for exceptional service and good luck to Karen and Ilse at the state level,” he said.

Employees are nominated by principals and district directors, and must meet the following criteria:

- Current, permanent employee
- Rank and file employee, not management or supervisory position
- Minimum of five years of service in nomination category

Karen Allison and Ilse Taborga will be recognized as Orange County Classified Employees of the Year at a luncheon in early April and are advancing for consideration at the state level. State winners will be announced in April and will be honored at a luncheon during Classified School Employee Week, May 15-19, 2017.

-MORE-
Newport - Mesa Unified School District

Classified Employees of the Year (Continued…)

NMUSD congratulates the following 2017 Classified Employees of the Years:

Karen Allison, Child Nutrition, Orange County Classified Employee of the Year

Karen Allison is known to have a natural talent in the kitchen and a caring approach with students. She has been with NMUSD for 12 years and currently manages the cafeteria at Adams Elementary School, serving more than 600 meals a day. Karen encourages students to try healthy, tasty meal options and accommodates students with gluten free diets, allergies or other special meal accommodations to ensure that all children are served appropriately within their dietary restrictions.

Karen goes well beyond her duties in child nutrition. She can be seen reading to students in classrooms, sometimes reading books about food, such as Stone Soup and Green Eggs and Ham. She dresses up as a food items for Halloween and briefly educates students on that food item. She has dressed up as fruits, vegetables, condiments and most kid’s favorite, pizza. One year Karen won the staff costume contest when she dressed up as an “old-fashion lunch lady”.

Ilse Taborga, Support Services and Security, Orange County Classified Employee of the Year

Ilse Taborga has been a school community facilitator for 14 years, currently working with families at Adams Elementary School in Costa Mesa and Ensign Middle School in Newport Beach. As the liaison between families, the school and the school district, she provides needed resources for families in need.

Whether families are going through difficult financial times, seeking social or emotional support, or just have the need to take a more active role in their child’s education, she is the go-to person for them. She connects families to school and district resources and when there is a need that goes beyond the resources available within the district, she connects families to non-profit community partners.

Developing long-term, trusting relationships with school and district staff, families and local community organizations is essential to Ilse’s success. She works side by side with her principals, teachers, counselors and administrators to ensure that our students and families are well aware of the supports available to them, beyond classroom instruction.

Pam Saunders, Office and Technical

Pam Saunders is an accounting assistant responsible for ensuring that the proper paperwork, approvals, tracking and timely payment is processed for the district’s insurance bills, travel requests, school book refunds, liability and emergency checks and so much more. She consistently stays up to date with changes in laws, mileage reimbursements, sales tax rates and many other legal and financial changes.

-MORE-
Classified Employees of the Year (Continued…)

Pam Saunders, Office and Technical (continued)

As a long-time resident of Costa Mesa and a product of NMUSD, having graduated from Estancia High School, Pam has tremendous ties to the community. Not only does her day to day work directly affect the staff and students on a daily basis, she also is extremely involved in the community.

Throughout her 16 years with the District, Pam has been an active member of the California School Employee Association and has taken on many leadership opportunities both with the local and statewide chapters. She currently serves as president of the local CSEA chapter.

Emma Tyaransen, Para-educator/ Instructional Assistant

As an instructional assistant at Newport Coast Elementary School, Emma works in various classrooms and adjusts effortlessly to each classroom’s management style and diverse student needs. She takes the time to get to know each student, learn their stories and backgrounds because she strongly believes that building relationships with students is the key to helping individual students achieve success academically and emotionally. Colleagues often seek Emma for advice and direction on a myriad of issues such as student discipline, student motivation, teaching techniques, and collaboration efforts with colleagues and parents.

In addition to her work at Newport Coast Elementary, Emma is a PTA leader and classroom volunteer at her daughter’s school, also within NMUSD. This provides Emma with increased opportunities to take a more active role in the community, and bridge relationships among staff and parents. Emma’s professional and engaging approach to student learning exemplifies the level of commitment our staff places on student learning and student success.

Olga Sandoval, Transportation

Olga Sandoval has been a bus driver with Newport-Mesa Unified School District since 2004. She has natural driving skills; some have even said she drives a 40 foot school bus so effortlessly, you would think she was driving a compact car.

Besides being an exceptional bus driver, Olga knows students’ by name and goes out of her way to introduce herself to as many parents as she can. She has genuine conversations with students and has a fun-loving approach with them, which earns the trust, respect and friendship of students and parents. She asks what they did during the weekend, how school was, how their grades are, if they were well-behaved and things of that nature. When students notice that she genuinely cares for them, they change bad behavior and work harder to please her, follow bus rules and are eager to tell her when they did well in school or at home.

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