Newport-Mesa Unified School District Announced Classified School Employees of the Year

On April 23, the Newport-Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) Board of Education recognized the 2018 Classified Employee of the Year awards program winners. 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 2018 Classified Employee of the Year winners are:

- My Hong Lam, Child Nutrition
- Tabitha Strange, Para Educator/Instructional Assistance
- Scott Parks, Transportation

“Congratulations to all of the winners and thank you for your dedicated efforts that continue to make Newport-Mesa an exceptional learning environment for our students,” said Superintendent Dr. Fred Navarro.

**My Hong Lam**

My Hong Lam has worked in the central kitchen for more than 18 years. She is currently a nutrition services assistant II and is employee of the year in the Child Nutrition category. Lam oversees the preparation of more than 1,000 daily meals. Under this pressure she still manages to exude a calmness that influences her team members to also go above and beyond. Her positive attitude is contagious and motivates the entire staff to package and prepare food with a smile.

Lam is able to lead and direct the work of her colleagues in a polite and cooperative manner. She consistently ensures the kitchen remains safe and sanitary, her efforts have contributed to numerous Awards of Excellence from the Orange County Health Care Agency. She also ensures that food is delicious, nutritious and made with the highest quality ingredients.

**Tabitha Strange**

Tabitha Strange serves as a special education instructional assistant and has worked for Victoria Elementary School for more than 18 years. She is the employee of the year in the category of Para-Educator and Instructional Assistance. Strange excels in integrating special education students within the larger school population and in motivating all students to fully tap into their skills and talents. She is able to listen to parents’ questions and concerns to collaboratively manage certain behaviors. She is dedicated to ensuring that all students reach their full potential.
Strange exhibits true compassion and patience for students. She becomes a part of each student’s story, meets them where they are in life and supports them to meet their goals. Her positive attitude and ability to truly connect with students of varying personalities and needs make her an invaluable resource to Victoria Elementary and our district as a whole.

Scott Parks

Selected as employee of the year in the category of Transportation, Scott Parks has worked with the district for more than seven years in the transportation department. Parks began his school bus career as a driver, then acquired the necessary certification to be a delegated behind the wheel trainer. As a delegated behind the wheel Trainer, he mentors school bus drivers to help improve their skills and ensure the highest level of safety for our students. He then transitioned to the role of dispatcher, where he excelled, particularly as a strong communicator, which improves efficiency and morale. Parks also has participated in the Bus in The Classroom program which teaches students with special needs life-long skills in independent mobility.

A few years ago he chose to return to being a bus driver, because he missed working directly with students. He continues to be a role model for colleagues and helps train new hires. He is known as a genuine, kind hearted, collaborative team player.

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