NEWS RELEASE
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CHAPARRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
EDUCATOR NAMED COUNTY TEACHER
OF THE YEAR

First-Grade Teacher Earns Award

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO — An elementary school teacher from Capistrano Unified School District who has twice earned National Board Certification has been named one of five 2015 Orange County Teachers of the Year.

Karen Gauthier received notification of the honor from Al Mijares, Orange County Superintendent of Schools, during a surprise announcement in front of her first-grade students at Chaparral Elementary School in Ladera Ranch early Thursday morning, May 15.

“On behalf of the entire District and my colleagues on the Board of Trustees, I want to congratulate Karen Gauthier on her selection as a county Teacher of the Year,” Board of Trustees President John M. Alpay said. “Karen is representative of the outstanding teachers in our District, and she serves as a shining example to her peers, the communities that we serve, and most importantly to her students.”

Each of the 56 schools in the District selected their site-level teachers of the year in January. Gauthier was one of three to receive the District honor and compete for the county award. She advanced as one of 15 semifinalists in the program along with another District teacher, Anthony Tubbs of Tesoro High School.

“Most of us can fondly recall an extraordinary teacher who made a difference in our lives,” said District Superintendent Joseph Farley. “They were most likely people whose compassion and expertise motivated us to learn and excel. It is exactly those types of educators being honored as Teacher of the Year.”

Gauthier began her career in the District at Oak Grove Elementary School in 1996. She moved to Chaparral in 2001, when she helped open the school. Gauthier earned her first National Board Certification in Early Childhood Education in 2002 and recertified in 2012. She has also served as an adjunct professor at the Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education, where she taught courses in Language Acquisition/Language Arts Methods and Child and Adolescent Literature and Composition.

This is the second consecutive year a CUSD teacher has been chosen as a county Teacher of the Year. Randy Hudson, a science teacher at Dana Hills High School, was honored last year.
The Orange County Department of Education chooses four K-12 Teachers of Year and one Teacher of the Year representing community colleges. The K-12 finalists are invited to represent the county in the California Teachers of the Year program.

"Karen Gauthier is the perfect representative of the high caliber of teaching found in all of Capistrano's schools. Teachers across the District and across all grade levels are so proud of her,” said Vicki Soderberg, President of the Capistrano Unified Education Association.

All five 2015 Orange County Teachers of the Year will be recognized at an awards banquet in October at the Disneyland Hotel.

CUSD employs about 2,150 teachers at 56 school sites. They average more than 15 years of experience in education and more than 60 percent have earned graduate degrees. A little more than 40 percent of teachers statewide have a graduate degree.

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