

PRESS RELEASE



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CUSD Honors Outstanding Classified Employees

Coronado Unified School District annually recognizes outstanding classified employees representing each of the four school sites, maintenance and operations, and the district office. Classified employees include all staff who are not credentialed teachers or administrators. The six 2023 awardees were nominated and selected by their colleagues and will be recognized publicly at the April 20 school board meeting.

“Our dedicated classified colleagues provide critical resources and ensure that our district is operating with efficiency and keep our students healthy, our facilities safe and clean, and our technology supported. Their value to our organization cannot be overstated,” said CUSD Superintendent Karl Mueller.

CUSD is proud to announce the following classified employees of the year for 2023:

Aaron Flores Pelayo, Maintenance Lead Worker

In addition to being selected as the employee of the year for the Maintenance and Operations Department, Pelayo was also named the CUSD Classified Employee of the Year. Pelayo has been part of the district maintenance team for over six years. His supervisor, Gary Hall, has high praise for Pelayo, “Aaron is my right hand man. He has a keen eye for detail and meets or exceeds expectations for quality and timely workmanship. I can always rely on Aaron to review a vendor’s work, identify deficiencies if they exist, and ensure a work order is not closed until the project is completed to our District’s professional standards.” As a lead maintenance worker, Pelayo works at all of the district facilities and helps supervise team members. “Aaron takes new staff under his wing, introduces them to the sites and their staff, and teaches them how to complete tasks in a timely and professional manner,” said executive assistant Kathy Mulvey. Kami McElligott, executive assistant to the superintendent added, “He starts each project with the end in mind. He wants it to look perfect when it is finished. I appreciate his hard work and determination even in the small things.”

Alanna Rickards, Coronado High School Lead Librarian

Rickards is in her seventh year in the district and last summer oversaw a complete modernization and remodel of the CHS library. “Alanna is the Florence Nightingale of our Library! Alanna’s love of literature, research and vision of what a library should offer students

and staff needs to be commended and celebrated. Alanna is the most dedicated, knowledgeable, caring and supportive employee at Coronado High School,” shared registrar Kathy Redding. “Alanna gives so much extra time to preparing the library, hosting students, working with kids, and supporting staff needs. She is always willing to take the extra step needed to ensure that every child gets materials, has a safe space to work, and finds opportunities to grow,” said vice principal Rikki Betancourt.

Megan Pettit, Coronado Middle School Library Media Technician

Pettit is in her tenth year in the district and is an essential and daily part of the school day for CMS students. “Megan provides a safe and comfortable space in our library for our students. She supports our students’ love of reading and books by creating beautiful displays of new novels for easy access by our students. She interviews students and creates book suggestions based on their interests,” said CMS teacher Kathy Cotten. “She hosts book clubs for our avid readers. She encourages deep discussions about the book and provides an opportunity for students to practice speaking and listening skills. She stays current on new books for adolescents and the students love to talk to her about what she has read.”

Andre Murphy, Village Elementary School Instructional Assistant

The staff at Village Elementary School selected Instructional Assistant Andre Murphy for the award. Murphy began working in the district in January 2017 and he is admired by Village staff for the passion he brings to his job. “His interactions with students inspire me to continue to ‘show-up’ for students every day! The relationships he has built with his team and students supports the success of our PE and recess program. He has taken on leadership responsibilities within the PE team from helping to plan various student activities following the physical education and PlayWorks standards to training and supporting new PE IAs and subs.” said vice principal Tanya White.

Yolanda Gonzalez, Silver Strand Elementary Child Nutrition Services team member

Gonzalez has been part of the nutrition services team for over five years. She is a kind and positive presence in the cafeteria and is a favorite among students. Her colleague Antonella Palmiero shared that Gonzalez is, “Always smiling, she makes sure every student gets the most nutritious meal, everyday. Her kindness makes her move mountains to serve even the pickiest eaters. The students are lucky to have her!”

Traci Orth, Technology Resource Technician

Orth is in her 15th school year at CUSD and was selected as the District Office awardee. She is the ‘go-to’ person for all elementary staff and student technology needs, and her calm demeanor and attention to detail have been a steady presence through significant changes in the role of technology in education over the past decade. Village Elementary teacher Rachel Bevilacqua nominated Orth for the award and shared that “Traci not only helps our teachers but communicates with families regarding student technology/devices and safety that is so pertinent for at-home learning. Her expertise and helpfulness give parents a sense of knowledge and clarity when needing assistance in helping their children at home.”

The honorees will be recognized at the beginning of the governing board meeting at 4pm on Thursday, April 20 at the CUSD District Office, 201 Sixth Street. The public, family, colleagues, and friends are invited to come for the special celebration.

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PHOTO: CUSD Maintenance Lead Worker Aaron Pelayo in the district maintenance workshop after being celebrated by his peers for being named the CUSD classified employee of the year. Pelayo is a maintenance lead worker and has been in the district for six years. He will be honored along with classified employees of the year from each school site at the April 20 school board meeting.

