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### **CUSD Recognizes Classified Employees Of The Year**

Coronado Unified School District annually recognizes five outstanding Classified employees representing the four school sites and the District Office. The 2022 awardees were nominated by their colleagues and recognized at the March 10 Board meeting.

“It is an honor to recognize the contributions of our Classified employees. These award winners truly demonstrate hard work, and service with compassion, empathy, and humility,” said Director of Human Resources Armando Farias.

CUSD’s five honorees:

Laura Orozco, CHS

Coronado High School Health Technician Laura Orozco has been named the 2022 CHS Classified Employee of the Year. Laura has worked in the district since 2006 as a PE aide and became the full time Health Technician at CHS since 2009. The pandemic put an extra burden on the district health care team and Laura responded by going above and beyond, stepping up to the challenge with grace and energy.

Laura’s extra work during the pandemic inspired her colleagues. “She has worked from home making calls during the evenings and weekends. She has been the frontline for our 1100 students,” said Joy Howard. “Laura, makes sure every student who comes through her health office feels special and heard. She is always willing to go above and beyond to call a parent, get a counselor involved or speak with admin to make sure the needs of her students are met,” added Rhonda Gearhart.

Ruben Sanchez, CMS

Coronado Middle School custodian Ruben Sanchez was selected as the 2022 CMS Classified Employee of the Year. Ruben has worked in the district since 2019. The pandemic added an extra burden on the district’s custodial crew, with disinfecting and sanitizing measures required multiple times during the day. His colleagues at CMS note that besides keeping the campus clean and safe, Ruben sets the tone on campus with his positive attitude, greeting staff and students every morning.

“Ruben has a great attitude, is reliable, and is an integral part of the CMS family. We realized right when he started what a gem he was, and we are so grateful to have him at CMS. He is an outstanding example to our students and staff and embodies the Triton 3; taking ownership, acting with integrity, and showing respect in everything he does,” said Principal Brooke Falar. Colleague Allyson Heyen added that in addition to Ruben’s tireless work ethic and contagious smile he always “goes above and beyond, asking if there are any extra projects he can help with in the classrooms.”

Kathy Wood, Village Elementary

Village Elementary School Health Technician Kathy Wood was selected as the 2022 VES Classified Employee of the Year. She has worked in the district since 2014 and she uniquely connects with both students and colleagues on a personal and professional level.

“Nurse Kathy reads continuously, keeping up with our ever-changing health news, sharing critical information with admin and faculty. These past two years have been particularly challenging for her and the health team, and her leadership has been a beacon of light for all of us at Village,” shared Kathleen Spane. “This award is so well-deserved, ‘Nurse Kathy’ is always there for her students, showing kindness and compassion,” added Principal Heidi Bergener.

Kimberley Junk, Silver Strand Elementary

Silver Strand Elementary School Administrative Assistant/Registrar Kimberley Junk was named the 2022 SSES Classified Employee of the Year. Kimberley has worked in the district for 18 years in many different capacities including in the front office at CMS and as a well-loved substitute at all school sites. Her gracious welcome is a hallmark of anyone entering the Silver Strand school office.

SSES Principal Jenny Moore said, “She gives personalized tours to all new students and their families, new freshly hired crew members, volunteers, and substitutes... to make everyone on campus feel welcome.” Colleague Erica DeGroat added that Junk “She helps by providing support to all the staff and jumps up to help when needed! She truly wears so many hats and Strand would be lost without her!”

Terri Freepartner, District Office and CUSD

Human Resources Administrative Assistant Terri Freepartner has been named the District Office 2022 Employee of the Year as well as the Classified Employee of the Year for CUSD. Terri has worked in the district since 2015. She is a steady and knowledgeable hand in helping employees, colleagues, families, and administrators navigate all aspects of Human Resources from employment to benefits. Human Resources Director Armando Farias said of Terri, “I have witnessed how she supports everyone who calls or comes into her office. Especially during the past two years during Covid, many times employees are worried or overwhelmed when they come in. People can cry in her office, and Terri is always calm and compassionate. She is a true listener. Terry leads from the heart. This recognition is a celebration of Terri and a thank you for giving so much to all of us.”

“On behalf of the district and the Governing Board I would like to thank all of our Classified team members. They are the glue of our district, the faces of our school sites, they keep us clean, safe and healthy, and create the conditions for our students to succeed,” said Superintendent Mueller.

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PHOTO: Coronado Unified School District team members Laura Orozco, Terri Freepartner, Kimberley Junk, Ruben Sanchez, and Kathy Wood (not pictured) received Classified Employee of the Year awards at the March 10 Board meeting.