



PRESS RELEASE

Poway Unified School District

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Two Poway Unified Counselors Named 2021 San Diego County School Counselors of the Year

(Poway/San Diego, CA) – The Poway Unified School District (PUSD) is proud to announce that **Nicole Pablo**, Twin Peaks Middle School, and **Fran Hjalmarson**, Los Peñasquitos Elementary School, have been named the 2021 San Diego County School Counselors of the Year by the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE). The recipients received surprise visits at their schools today and were recognized by their colleagues, family members, and PUSD leadership in front of students and staff. They also each received a \$500 check from sponsor North Island Credit Union.



Fran Hjalmarson, an elementary school counselor for 18 years and PUSD employee for 28 years, won for the Elementary School Counselor of the Year category. Her nomination reads in part: “A seasoned professional, Mrs. Hjalmarson is the District’s go-to person for any counseling related questions and concerns. In addition to serving as the lead counselor at the elementary school level, she also serves as our District’s crisis response team leader.” A No Excuses University consultant, published author, and

mentor to new counselors and interns, “Mrs. Hjalmarson is a bright and shining star in our school district; truly, she is a gift, and her contributions are unparalleled,” according to Greg Mizel, Associate Superintendent of Student Support Services.



Nicole Pablo, a school counselor for over a decade, won for the Middle School Counselor of the Year category. Her nomination reads in part: “Currently she serves as the lead for counselors working at the middle school level in PUSD. She was elected by her peers to serve in this position because of her collaborative and professional demeanor.” She is also a recent adjunct faculty member at both the University of San Francisco and San Diego State University as well as a Hatching Results trainer, consultant, and coauthor. “Ms. Pablo is a good listener. She has excellent intuition, and she is adept at identifying common interests when engaging in crucial conversations to navigate change,” said Mr. Mizel.

The School Counselor of the Year (SCOY) program started in 2019-20 to recognize and celebrate the work and service of professional school counselors in San Diego County. Winners are selected based on qualifications such as advocacy for the profession, impact and support for diverse students, leadership and collaboration, and professional development. Mrs. Hjalmarson and Ms. Pablo are the first counselors in PUSD to receive this honor. They will be honored at an SDCOE ceremony in February 2022.

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