



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Poway Unified Announces Its PUSD Classified Employees of the Year *Darrel Duplechain and Cindy Hicks Receive School District Honors***

The Poway Unified School District is proud to announce that Darrel Duplechain, Poway High School Lead Custodian, and Cindy Hicks, Student Support Services Prevention Specialist/Grant Researcher, have been chosen as the PUSD Classified Employees of the Year for 2012.

A committee of district and site representatives selected the two District Classified Employees of the Year (one representing school sites and one representing district departments) based on work performance, contributions to the school district, and community service.

San Diego County Office of Education also sponsors a Classified Employee Recognition Program, honoring one member of classified service for San Diego County. This year's Poway Unified representative at the county level is Darrel Duplechain.

**Darrel Duplechain**  
Lead Custodian, *Poway High School*

Darrel Duplechain is 100% service-oriented, always willing to go the extra mile for anyone at anytime. When a teacher needs help with an electrical problem, flooded science classroom, or sick student, he takes care of it immediately. When a secretary or clerk needs

a box of paper or a floor vacuumed, Darrel tackles the challenge without delay. Arriving with a smile on his face, Darrel gets the job done, taking immense pride in his work while making others happy.

Outside his custodial work, Darrel truly distinguishes himself in his school and community involvement. He is a member of the football coaching staff, assistant golf coach, and periodically visits classrooms. A native of Louisiana with a Cajun heritage and knowledge of French, he will stop by in the French classroom to speak with the students. On Memorial Day, he is one of approximately 25 veterans who speak to Poway High students about their experience in combat, in his case the Vietnam War. Darrel also serves regularly as a Senior Project mentor, typically for students interested in a career in the military. He is as well known to students as staff, and is truly part of the "larger" Poway community.

"Darrel models the qualities and values we expect of our students. He is kind and positive, walking the campus with a giant smile while greeting others, making them feel good about themselves," said Scott Fisher, principal. "Some of our most challenging students spend time working with him, and they do really well. He talks to them about the value of service, and making their school a better place."

"When Mr. Duplechain's selection as Classified Employee of the Year was announced to the entire staff and student body over the loudspeaker during 5<sup>th</sup> period, teachers told me that students spontaneously cheered for 'Coach Darrel,' and the students in at least one class came outside to give him a standing ovation," Scott Fisher stated.

"I have always thoroughly enjoyed working alongside Darrel," said a Poway High science teacher. "He has an uplifting attitude, a terrific work ethic, and a great sense of humor. You would think science staff would be the least favorite group of teachers for a custodian, given the mess we can make with labs and the way we fill trashcans with odd things such as dissected frog body parts. Nevertheless, Darrel is always quick to supply

much-needed trash bags and paper towels, all the while joking that his Cajun background makes him hungry to make a meal of the bull frogs!”

Darrel has served PUSD since 1993, first in the PUSD Transportation Department as a school bus driver. In 1996 he became a custodian at Mt. Carmel High School, moving to Poway High in 2001 where he became Lead Custodian in 2005.

### **Cindy Hicks**

Prevention Specialist/Grant Researcher, *Student Support Services*

Determined to see that each student has the opportunity to be successful, Cindy Hicks harnesses all her passion and energy to find the solutions that reach out to help PUSD kids. She works with the community and with PUSD staff to coordinate efforts through grants and Student Support Services programs that make an important difference to students.

Cindy is the go-to person when something needs to be done so that a program runs smoothly or a district/community event is presented in the most effective manner. She has the ability to arrive at sensible and logical solutions to complex problems. Whatever the challenge, she can be relied upon to work it out and find resolution.

Student Support Services Executive Director Elaine Cofrancesco said, “Cindy is resourceful, dedicated, and diligent in completing tasks that deal with both students and staff. If there is a question or a request, you can count on Cindy to find the answer and follow through. When something needs to be done, Cindy is the person who will get it done!”

“Cindy provides technical leadership and direction to department staff and is always available to assist when needed. Her upbeat and encouraging manner serves as an inspiration to others,” Elaine Cofrancesco stated. “Cindy also frequently volunteers to assist others in the school district and in the community.”

Cindy believes in the far-reaching effects of community collaboration and its support of the students and parents.

“Her connections with community organizations bring together the resources and expertise that help support our students,” said Elaine Cofrancesco. Cindy works with community organizations that focus on youth prevention, safety, and overall student well-being, serving on the Safety Wellness Advocacy Coalition; the Palomar/Pomerado Alcohol, Tobacco, and other Drugs sub-committee; and the Parent Awareness Collaborative.

Cindy is involved with the San Diego Mentor Coalition and networks with other mentoring program staff and community organizers. She volunteers in law enforcement and fire department community activities and works with the Red Cross as a Certified Disaster Preparedness trainer. She also assists with food drives and is constantly seeking clothes and household items for students and families in need.

Cindy has worked for Poway Unified for 24 years. Prior to her position as Prevention Specialist/Grant Researcher in Student Support Services, Cindy held the positions of Instructional Aide and Physical Education Aide at Pomerado Elementary School, and Health Attendant at Twin Peaks Middle School. She came to the District Office in 1993 where she worked as Community Relations Assistant and Community Relations Specialist. As a Prevention Specialist and Grant Researcher, Cindy has made many contributions and is an outstanding member of the team assisting all PUSD school sites and districtwide student support programs.

## 2012 Poway Unified School Site and Department Classified Employees of the Year

The following is a list of all PUSD school site and department classified employees of the year. All of these finalists are outstanding representatives of the high caliber staff that is characteristic of Poway Unified School District classified employees.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Site</u>	<u>Position</u>
<b>Nicole Sanseverino</b>	Adobe Bluffs Elementary	Instructional Assistant-PE
<b>Shelley Silva</b>	Canyon View Elementary	ESS Supervisor
<b>Mary Vedborg</b>	Chaparral Elementary	Library Media Technician-Elementary
<b>Cynthia (Cindy) Winslow</b>	Creekside Elementary	Instructional Assistant-ELL
<b>Carol LeClair</b>	Deer Canyon Elementary	Instructional Assistant-PE
<b>Evelia Fernandez</b>	Del Sur Elementary	Sub Campus Security Assistant
<b>Cynthia Kindig</b>	Garden Road Elementary	Instructional Assistant II-Special Education
<b>Ramon Herrera</b>	Highland Ranch Elementary	Custodian
<b>Mary Catherine (Cathy) Hall</b>	Los Peñasquitos Elementary	Data Assistant
<b>Melissa Babin</b>	Monterey Ridge Elementary	Health Services Technician
<b>Hilary Ramirez</b>	Morning Creek Elementary	Lead ESS Assistant
<b>Elaine Meadows</b>	Painted Rock Elementary	Food and Nutrition Assistant II
<b>Marie Adams</b>	Park Village Elementary	School Administrative Assistant-Elementary
<b>Ryan Woolever</b>	Pomerado Elementary	Lead Custodian
<b>Janet (Jan) Duffy</b>	Shoal Creek Elementary	Instructional Assistant I-Special Education
<b>Myra Prather</b>	Stone Ranch Elementary	ESS Supervisor
<b>Michele Blais</b>	Sundance Elementary	Instructional Assistant II-Special Education
<b>Bridgette Padilla</b>	Sunset Hills Elementary	School Administrative Assistant-Elementary
<b>Earl Chance</b>	Tierra Bonita Elementary	Custodian
<b>John Uran</b>	Turtleback Elementary	Lead Custodian
<b>Laura Gonzalez Garcia</b>	Valley Elementary	Parent Liaison-Bilingual
<b>Lynette Zunker</b>	Westwood Elementary	Instructional Assistant I-Special Education
<b>Kimberly Wagner</b>	Willow Grove Elementary	School Administrative Assistant-Elementary
<b>Lisa Ann Beagle</b>	Bernardo Heights Middle	Instructional Assistant I-Special Education
<b>Julie Young</b>	Black Mountain Middle	Instructional Assistant I-Special Education
<b>Susan Dunlap</b>	Meadowbrook Middle	Library Media Technician-Secondary
<b>Patricia (Trish) Weaver</b>	Mesa Verde Middle	Counseling Assistant-Middle School
<b>Lynne Lesh</b>	Oak Valley Middle	Counseling Assistant-Middle School
<b>Daniel (Dan) Sinclair</b>	Twin Peaks Middle	Custodial Supervisor I
<b>Griselda Bonales</b>	Abraxas High	School Administrative Assistant-Cont. H.S.
<b>Terry Flenniken</b>	Del Norte High	Custodian
<b>Jaime Efe</b>	Mt. Carmel High	Custodian
<b>Darrel Duplechain</b>	Poway High	Lead Custodian
<b>Laura Hatch</b>	Rancho Bernardo High	LAN Administrator
<b>Kimberly Carroll</b>	Westview High	High School Registrar
<b>Precious Halliday</b>	Alternative Programs	Instructional Assistant
<b>Laura Attard</b>	Early Childhood & ESS	Accounting Assistant IV
<b>Lucy Marasigan</b>	Finance	Accountant II
<b>Richard Garcia</b>	Information Technology	Network Services Support Technician
<b>Linda Meloney</b>	Learning Support Services	District Testing Specialist
<b>Frank Fowler</b>	Maintenance & Operations	HVAC & Refrigeration Technician
<b>Marco Ramirez</b>	Personnel Support Services	Lead Custodian
<b>Robin Downey</b>	Special Education	Instructional Assistant II-Special Education
<b>Cindy Hicks</b>	Student Support Services	Prevention Specialist/Grant Researcher
<b>Emmett Cruz</b>	Transportation	Bus Driver