

2016-2017 DMUSD School Site Teachers of the Year

Ashley Falls School– Danielle Rhoades, 2nd Grade Teacher



Congratulations to Ms. Danielle Rhoades, our Ashley Falls Site Teacher of the Year! Danielle is an excellent example of what a Del Mar teacher should be. She is constantly looking for ways to grow as an educator and adapt her instruction to meet individual needs of students in her classroom. Ms. Rhoades is the type who goes out of her way to make students and families feel connected to her and one another. Students feel safe in her classroom to take risks, ask questions, and take ownership of their learning to make as much progress as possible. Not only does she shine in the classroom, she also dedicates her time to bettering herself outside the classroom through leadership roles throughout the district. Ms. Rhoades is one of our District Math Apprentices. She teaches and mentors teachers and staff on how to teach math through cognitively guided instruction. We are so proud and lucky to have Danielle as part of the Ashley Falls Team!

Carmel Del Mar School – Kathryn Symington, 1st Grade Teacher



We are pleased to announce CDM's Teacher of the Year, Kathryn Symington! Kathryn is a very dedicated teacher and leader at our site and at the District level. She is a team player, always helping out her 1st Grade Team and other grade levels. She is very innovative when creating her lessons. All lessons are thought out, engaging, and implemented seamlessly. We appreciate her kindness and love to the students on campus. The kids love her! Kathryn strives to extend the kids learning beyond the classroom and leads them toward their own personal excellence. CDM is lucky to have Kathryn, shown here with several of her students. Congratulations!

Del Mar Heights School – Kathy Minarik, STEAM+ Science Specialist



In the seven years Kathy Minarik has been the science teacher at Del Mar Heights her dedication and commitment to excellence has been unwavering. No matter what new roles, challenges or changes, Kathy has taken on she has not only embraced them, but exceeded all expectations. Kathy Minarik has fully embraced the new STEAM+ model and has used it as an opportunity to work more collaboratively with the entire STEAM+ team and to incorporate additional engineering elements in to her classes for all grade levels. She is a true team player and her enthusiasm to collaborate by sharing both ideas and materials helps our students excel in all of their STEAM+ classes. Kathy has implemented lessons that insured students at each grade level engaged in the engineering design process. Kathy Minarik is truly an example of why STEAM+ is such a critical component of our district's educational program. She sets the standard for instructional practices and commitment to professional development.

Del Mar Hills Academy – Chelsea Moore, 6th Grade Teacher



Chelsea has the finest qualities a teacher can have: dedication, a wonderful sense of humor, determination, modesty, a constant desire to learn/grow, a knack for quiet leadership and skillful mediation, tolerance and acceptance of others, creativity, and most noteworthy, her innate ability to find the positive in all things. Chelsea's light-hearted laugh and genuine authenticity make her a joy to be around. Chelsea is a teacher who puts the needs of her students, and all SurfRiders, first in all that she does. In her classroom, she consistently designs new and innovative projects that integrate technology across disciplines. Students in her class are highly engaged by the teaching and learning that take place in their dynamic and energy-filled classroom. She is committed to ensuring her students learn what they need to know and to be successful academically, socially, and emotionally. Chelsea's connections with her students are so genuine, they feel like part of her extended family when they cross the threshold of the classroom every day. Chelsea's impact at Del Mar Hills reaches far beyond the four walls of her classroom. She voluntarily serves on several committees and co-chairs a variety of school-wide endeavors, like our Student Council, Talent Show, and Social Committee. We often hear Chelsea asking, "How can I help?" whenever a need arises at our school. Her dedication to her students, colleagues, school, and the district at-large is extraordinary, and we are proud that Chelsea Moore will serve as Del Mar Hills' 2017 Teacher of the Year.

Ocean Air School – Rafaela Zanetti, 5th Grade Teacher



Ocean Air is pleased to announce Rafaela Zanetti as Certificated Teacher of the Year! Rafaela's 5th grade classroom is a warm and supportive environment where students excel both academically and socially. The warm, yet well organized and structured environment she creates is a calm haven for students to express ideas and reach their full potential, knowing they have her full support on a daily basis. She is a dynamic teacher, and her love of teaching really shines through every day of the year! The level of communication and guidance of all her students is unmatched. Her calm, gentle and level demeanor is an asset not only to her students but to the entire 5th grade team as well. She is well respected among her coworkers and peers and her extra efforts do not go unrecognized. We are so lucky she calls Ocean Air home - Congratulations Rafaela!

Sage Canyon School – Michelle Turnbull, 5th Grade Teacher



When thinking about a nominee for Teacher of the Year, Michelle Turnbull is exactly the kind of teacher we should have representing Sage Canyon. She is organized, dependable, inspiring and her love of children and this profession is visible in everything she does. Michelle is an incredible teacher. Each and every day she engages her students in meaningful lessons that are presented in new and innovative ways. She holds her students to high expectations and provides continuous support to help them reach those expectations. It is an honor to work alongside such a talented teacher.

Sycamore Ridge School – Jennifer Fletcher, Kindergarten Teacher



Sycamore Ridge School is pleased to announce Jennifer Fletcher as our teacher of the year! Jenn is always kind and considerate to everyone while at the same time she knows how to “keep it real”. Jenn has a passion for education and is always reading and studying to improve her practice. Her warm smile and can-do spirit make her a joy to work with each day. She is a leader at Sycamore Ridge School and in the Del Mar Union School District. Jenn’s work and focus in mathematics serves as a model for all teachers. Jenn’s ideas and insights into students’ thinking and learning are invaluable. She is a super star teacher and person and we are all so grateful to have you as our colleague and friend.

Torrey Hills School – Tracy Garber, 5th Grade Teacher



Ms. Garber is an amazingly talented, intelligent, and caring teacher. She puts students first at all times, includes all students, and constantly adjusts instruction based on students’ needs. She provides every student with valuable feedback and support. Ms. Garber is able to bring out the best in each child, and helps them achieve excellence in academics and citizenship. Ms. Garber is extremely knowledgeable about all subject areas and goes above and beyond to make sure students are as well. Ms. Garber is a life-long learner who constantly updates her own understanding through professional development and reading to ensure she is using best practices in the classroom. She is a true champion for her students. This year, Ms. Garber took the lead in organizing the fifth-grade trip to Biz Town as well as the Endangered Animals Project. Additionally, she created the Thursday Math Lab program and organized the Noetic and Continental Math contests. Ms. Garber supported all fifth graders by arranging a writing contest, including inviting a special guest speaker from the American Immigration Lawyers Association to give a presentation to students so they develop a better sense of history and civic responsibility. Ms. Garber works tirelessly, putting in many long hours at the end of the day and on weekends, all for the benefit of the children. Ms. Garber is an extremely professional educator who puts families first. She is a dedicated and hard-working teacher who has a positive attitude in every interaction. Her warm smile is inviting and reassuring to students who are new to her class and to every member of the community. She is always eager to help and inspire her colleagues. Her leadership on school committees helps to drive our work forward for all of our kids. It is with great pride that we honors Ms. Tracy Garber as our teacher of the year and representative of the excellent teaching staff at Torrey Hills.