

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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FIVE EDUCATORS HONORED AS SAN DIEGO COUNTY TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

(SAN DIEGO) October 16, 2010 - Five local educators selected from a field of 44 nominees were named San Diego County Teachers of the Year during the 20th annual “**Cox Presents: A Salute to Teachers brought to you by Ashford University**” in cooperation with the San Diego County Office of Education. The annual event honors San Diego County’s public school teachers and was televised live on [Channel 4 San Diego](#) from the Balboa Theater in downtown San Diego.

During the event, 10 finalists were named then the field was narrowed down to the following five 2010-11 San Diego County Teachers of the Year:

- **Darin Curtis** - Tierra del Sol Middle School, Lakeside Union School District
- **Eric Frandsen** - King Middle School, Oceanside Unified School District
- **Stephen Keiley** - Monarch School, San Diego County Office of Education
- **Ericka Senegar- Mitchell** - Serra High School, San Diego Unified School District
- **Shaylene Watkins** - Monterey Ridge Elementary School, Poway Unified School District

The five teachers of the year will go on to represent San Diego County in the California Teacher of the Year program, which will be announced later this year. Nominees for San Diego County Teacher of the Year were selected by their school districts based on student achievement, teaching philosophy, familiarity with current issues in education and community involvement.

Darin Curtis has made a huge impact on the health and well-being of children during his 18-year tenure teaching Physical Education classes. Curtis, who received a master's degree from Azusa Pacific University, teaches eighth-grade students at **Tierra del Sol Middle School**. Through his physical education classes, he's able to teach teamwork and offer health tips so that middle school students care about their health and well being. Curtis strives to keep kids fit and reduce obesity rates with after-school athletics, lunchtime intramural sports, and attendance recovery programs.

Eric Frandsen began his career as a fishing boat captain, working in the field of marine ecology and operating as a geochemical sampler. Realizing his work was not satisfying, Frandsen remembered several influential teachers who made an impact on his life and decided that his leadership skills were better served to help kids develop a love of learning. With his unique background and creative style, Frandsen's seventh-grade math students at **King Middle School** learn concepts by studying mussel shells to garner statistics, proportion golf to find the height of unreachable objects, and through his stories including "The Adventures of Pyt" for the Pythagorean Theorem and the "Legend of the Seven Siblings" series for basic geometry. He has been teaching for 10 years.

Stephen Keiley has been instructing a combination fourth -and fifth-grade class at the Monarch School for five years. All of Keiley's students are classified as homeless and many reside in shelters, motels, cars or "couch surf" just to survive. In order to provide immediate feedback to his students, Keiley uses technology to help kids focus and learn including a SMART board and the web-based PLATO Learning system so that he can give his students immediate feedback. Each day, Keiley gives his students a daily dose of love and the most powerful tool to fight their poverty and homelessness: an education. He has been teaching for nine years, was a foster parent, adopted one of his students, and continues to be inspired by the determination of his students to rise above their hardships and seek an education.

As a general and advanced placement biology teacher at **Junipero Serra High School**, **Erika Senegar-Mitchell** embraces curiosity in her classroom and believes that education is the key to overcoming poverty. Her mission as a teacher is to promote

literacy through scientific discovery, and she is the founder and director of the “Science in the City Outreach Program,” a partnership with commercial life science industry leaders and “Ladies of Science in the City,” a group of twenty young women who have a passion for science. With the help of dedicated teachers, Senegar-Mitchell was able to escape the violence and the poverty of the inner city, and she hopes to do the same for her students. She has been teaching for 14 years.

Shaylene Watkins’ classroom at **Monterey Ridge Elementary** is filled with fourth- and fifth-grade students who are working on hands-on, team-oriented projects. Watkins teaches each student to rise to their challenges and discover their intellectual individuality. Growing up, Watkins says she felt overlooked and her home life was far from nurturing. She found her calling when she turned her rebellious lifestyle around and enrolled in college. “Because education saved my life, I never doubted I would do anything but share the power of education with others,” says Watkins. When a student was hospitalized due to chemotherapy, Watkins became her “home hospital teacher” to continue her academic and emotional health. She has been teaching for 10 years.

In addition to the five Teachers of the Year, the remaining 10 finalists were:

Aida Barraza Jarrett Hilltop Middle School(Sweetwater Union High School District); **Kristina Campbell**, Sweetwater High School(Sweetwater Union High School District); **Jessica Frichtel**, Kearny Construction Tech Academy (San Diego Unified School District); **Kasey Galik**, Carmel Valley Middle School and Earl Warren Middle School (San Dieguito Union High School District); **Sofia Sandoval**, Southwest High School (Sweetwater Union High School District);

In addition, two educators were honored with special awards.

Jamie Hagen-Holt was honored as the **Qualcomm Science and Technology Educator of the Year** for her expertise and passion in the classroom, in her district, and throughout the community. Hagen-Holt teaches eighth-graders at Vista Magnet Middle School who learn about a variety of issues from investigating desalination to handling hazardous materials, and how they apply in the real world.

Marion Soloway was recognized as the **Sycuan Environmental Educator of the Year** because of her outstanding accomplishments as leader of the Rancho San Diego

Roots & Shoots service learning club. A seventh-grade biology teacher at Hillsdale Middle School, Soloway has embraced the service-learning model of Dr. Jane Goodall's global Roots & Shoots program. She has received local, regional and national recognition for her projects, and two personal visits from Dr. Goodall.

Sponsors of "Cox Presents: A Salute to Teachers" include presenting sponsor Ashford University, Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, Qualcomm, Sony, San Diego County Credit Union, National University, NBC Universal, *San Diego Union-Tribune* and CNN.

"Cox Presents: A Salute to Teachers" will replay on Channel 4 San Diego on Sun., Oct. 17 at 7:30 p.m.; Sat., Oct, 30 at 7 p.m.; and Sat., Nov. 6 at 8 p.m. on Cox and Time Warner.

ITV Channel 16 will replay the show on Sun., Oct. 24 at 7 p.m.; Wed., Nov. 3 at 9 p.m.; Thurs., Nov. 11 at 9 p.m.; Sat., Nov. 13 at 11 a.m.; Thurs., Nov. 25 at 7 p.m.; and on Sun., Nov. 28 at 6 p.m.

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