

SchoolsFirst FCU Partners with North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce for 7th Annual Heroes in Education Awards Dinner

TUSTIN, Calif. (April 30, 2026) – [SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union](https://www.schoolsfirstfcu.com) partnered with the North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce for the Seventh Annual Heroes in Education Awards Dinner, recognizing outstanding contributions in education.

The annual event, hosted by the Chamber of Commerce, honors individuals who support student success across local schools. Awards are presented in the following categories: Primary and Secondary Principal of the Year, Primary and Secondary Teacher of the Year, Special Education Teacher of the Year, Parent Volunteer of the Year, STEM Teacher of the Year, Physical Education Teacher of the Year and Visual and Performing Arts Teacher of the Year.

New this year, SchoolsFirst FCU supported the recognition of classified school employees, an essential group of professionals who contribute to school operations and student success. Three classified staff members, representing elementary, middle and high school levels were honored at the event. Nominated by peers, students and parents, the honorees were recognized and received awards from Nakima Boleware, manager of the Northridge branch.

Thirteen honorees were recognized at the April 22 event, with each receiving a wagon filled with school supplies for their classrooms and students. The three classified staff honorees each received a \$500 award from SchoolsFirst FCU.

2026 Heroes in Education Award Recipients

- Visual and Performing Arts Teacher of the Year: Tara Corral, Calahan Street Elementary
- Physical Education Teacher of the Year: Michelle Brait, Reseda Charter High School
- STEM Teacher of the Year: Marcelle Khalil-Hein, Granada Hills Charter TK-12
- Elementary Teacher of the Year: Carroll Gelberg, El Oro Way Charter for Enriched Studies
- Secondary Teacher of the Year: Amy Edmonds, Robert Frost Middle School
- Special Education Teacher of the Year: Caryl Medina, Sven Lokrantz Special Education Center
- Elementary Principal of the Year: Christine Chun, Balboa Elementary Gifted Magnet
- Secondary Principal of the Year: Cindy Duong, Grover Cleveland Charter High School
- Parent Volunteer of the Year: Kimberly Amado

Classified Awards

- Jin Ok, Beckford Charter for Enriched Studies
- Erik Heil, Sven Lokrantz Special Education Center
- Jorge Garcia, Granada Hills Charter TK-12

Golden Apple Award

- Karen Turner, Alfred B. Nobel Charter Middle School

“Educators and school employees play a critical role in student success every day,” said Josh Smith, vice president of school and community relations. “We partner with the North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce to help recognize both certificated and classified staff who make a difference in their schools and communities.”

###

About SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union

SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union is dedicated to improving the financial lives of its Members. Founded in 1934 by 126 school employees, the Member-owned cooperative provides a full range of financial products and services to more than 1.5 million Members and is the largest financial institution dedicated to serving school employees and their families. SchoolsFirst FCU has been named California’s top credit union by Forbes for seven consecutive years and recognized by J.D. Power as the #1 Credit Union for Member Banking Satisfaction for two years in a row. With more than \$36 billion in assets, SchoolsFirst FCU is the largest credit union in California and the third largest in the United States. For more information, visit schoolsfirstfcu.org.

Insured by NCUA.

About the North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce

The North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce (NVRCC) supports our members by creating community to offer opportunities to grow, learn, and advance. We expand our reach to encourage connections, becoming a beacon of information and collaboration with the Northern San Fernando Valley businesses and neighborhoods.



Photo Caption:

From left to right: Nakima Boleware; Jin Ok of Beckford Charter for Enriched Studies; Erik Heil of Sven Lokrantz Special Education Center; and Jorge Garcia of Granada Hills Charter TK–12.

Contact:

Robin Wachner
Vice President, Communications & Member Engagement
media@schoolsfirstfcu.org