  
 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SchoolsFirst FCU Honors Classified School Employees in Recognition Events Throughout California**

**Tustin, Calif. (June 18, 2024)** – [SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union](https://www.schoolsfirstfcu.org/gateway/schoolsfirstfcu/home), the largest credit union serving school employees and their families, recently recognized the exemplary school employees who were named winners in annual competitions that honor Classified School Employees of the Year at county and statewide levels.

**Sacramento County**

SchoolsFirst FCU sponsored the Sacramento County Classified School Employees of the Year competition, which recognized seven classified school employees representing various categories of non-certified, non-management employees. Winners were recognized by SchoolsFirst FCU at the June 2 Sacramento River Cats game, and all winners advanced to competition at the state level sponsored by the California Department of Education. Classified school employees recognized by the Sacramento County Office of Education included:

* Kiana Davis, office manager, Twin Rivers Unified School District (Clerical and Administrative Services Category)
* Robert Whittaker, head custodian, Twin Rivers Unified School District (Custodial and Maintenance Services Category)
* Jeannie Greenbaum, food service worker, Folsom Cordova Unified School District (Food and Nutrition Services Category)
* Svetlana Gerasenkova, elementary paraeducator, Folsom Cordova Unified School District (Paraprofessional Services Category)
* Leonora “Leo” Torrez, campus monitor, Folsom Cordova Unified School District (Security Services Category)
* Samuel Portilla, support specialist, Folsom Cordova Unified School District (Technical Services Category)
* Joshua Crotts, instructional materials coordinator, Twin Rivers Unified School District (Transportation Services Category); also one of nine winners of the 2024 California Classified School Employees of the Year statewide competition.

**Orange County**

In Orange County, nine classified school employees were named the 2024 Orange County Classified School Employees of the Year. SchoolsFirst FCU delivered $500 checks and gift tote bags to all winners during California’s Classified School Employee Week in May, and each honoree advanced to the statewide competition. This year’s winners in Orange County included:

* Mary McCulloch, school office coordinator, McAuliffe Middle School, Los Alamitos Unified School District (Clerical and Administrative Services Category)
* Robin Dunning, campus supervisor, Dwyer Middle School, Huntington Beach City School District (Security Services Category)
* Hung “Hank” Nguyen, electronics technician, Maintenance and Operations, Newport-Mesa Unified School District (Skilled Trade Services Category)
* Concepcion “Connie” Flores, cook/baker, Garden Grove High School, Garden Grove Unified School District (Food and Nutrition Services Category)
* Rachell Chasteler, health office aide, Linda Vista Magnet Elementary, Saddleback Valley Unified School District (Health and Student Services Category)
* Carol Moore, library media technician, Pioneer Middle School, Tustin Unified School District (Technical Services Category)
* Taia Thompson, behavior support assistant, Cambridge Elementary School, Orange Unified School District (Paraprofessional Services Category)
* Allen Ortiz, head custodian, Star View Elementary School, Ocean View School District (Custodial and Maintenance Services Category)
* Julia Canas, school bus driver, transportation, Ocean View School District (Transportation Services Category)

**Statewide Competition**

The California Department of Education named the nine winners of the Classified Employees of the Year competition on May 1. Winners in each category of non-certified, non-management employees included:

* Clerical and Administrative Services: Aries Lewis, community liaison, Green Valley and Oak View High Schools, Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District, San Bernardino County (five years of service)
* Custodial and Maintenance Services: Jason Cheeseman, utility person II, North Elementary School, Tracy Unified School District, San Joaquin County (10 years of service)
* Food and Nutrition Services: Concepcion (Connie) Flores, cook/baker, Garden Grove High School, Garden Grove Unified School District, Orange County (23 years of service)
* Health and Student Services: Nachole Yaley, health clerk/school secretary and administrative assistant, Millville Elementary School, Millville Elementary School District, Shasta County (six years of service)
* Paraprofessional Services: Sara Sanchez, paraeducator, Green Hills Elementary School, Millbrae Elementary School District, San Mateo County (10 years of service)
* Security Services: Isaiah Joiner, school security, Mesa View Middle School, Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District, San Bernardino County (10 years of service)
* Skilled Trades Services: Joseph Federico, senior tile layer, facilities division, Los Angeles Unified School District, Los Angeles County (24 years of service)
* Technical Services: Rinat Fried, research associate, Oakland Unified School District, Alameda County (12 years of service)
* Transportation Services: Joshua Crotts, instructional materials coordinator, Twin Rivers Unified School District, Sacramento County (13 years of service)

“It is an honor to recognize the contributions of classified school employees to our schools, students and communities,” said Josh Smith, vice president, school and community relations for SchoolsFirst FCU. “Classified employees keep our schools running efficiently and create the environment that makes learning possible.”

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About SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union

SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union is the largest credit union serving school employees, and once again Forbes has named SchoolsFirst FCU the top credit union in California. Serving school employees and their families, the organization is dedicated to delivering World-Class Personal Service and improving the financial lives of its Members. Today they serve more than 1.4 million Members with a full range of financial products and services. SchoolsFirst FCU was founded in 1934, when 126 school employees pooled $1,200 and established a Member-owned cooperative to help improve each other's lives. In 2024, the Credit Union reported more than $30 billion in assets and remains the largest credit union in California. For more information about SchoolsFirst FCU, visit schoolsfirstfcu.org.

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