



First Annual  
*Teacher Appreciation and  
Recognition Reception*

Monday, May 22, 2017



*In partnership with*



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Rio Rancho's Injury Attorneys



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PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Igniting Student Potential

## Teacher Appreciation and Recognition Reception

### Program

Welcome and Introductions: Gary Tripp, RRPS Chief of Staff and Engagement Officer

Remarks: Dr. V. Sue Cleveland, RRPS Superintendent of Schools

Remarks: Anita Sanchez and Aaron Piñon, Sanchez & Piñon Law Firm (Teacher Appreciation Sponsors)

Recognition of School Staff Members of the Year

Recognition and Prize Drawing: Teacher Appreciation Award Winners

Thank you and good evening!

Special  
Thanks!



Claudia Andrews  
Jana Chenault  
Abigail Gonzales  
Courtney Rogers  
Veronica Sanders  
Jerry Schalow  
Sodexo

# Teacher Appreciation Award Recipients

## Preschool:



**Jennifer Wiegmann, Shining Stars Preschool**

"She loves all our students as her own . . . The first moment I met her for our home visit, I have felt comfortable leaving my son . . . I have seen some of my son's friends not have parents come visit . . . They were sad and Ms. Jen was there to make them feel very special and made sure they had a friend to sit with and not feel left out."

## Elementary Schools:

**Andrea Infantino, Cielo Azul Elementary**

"Nominating this teacher for her superior kindness and pleasantness to my son . . . Some fun projects . . . An example of the student's choice of a label they could research like Disney or Star Wars and how the company has expanded over time . . . She is always positive and looks at the students' potential and builds up students with love and much patience. "



**Alan Griffin, Colinas del Norte Elementary**

"He is funny, he cares about everybody and everything, he helps all of his students, and everybody loves him."

" I think that he's a great math teacher and that he teaches everyone wonderfully . . . When someone needs help he is always there to help them out. He cares about them more than himself."

**Mary Wiebelhaus, Enchanted Hills Elementary**

"Ms. Wiebelhaus has a knack for propping up struggling students. She demonstrates to her students to not be intimidated by the material, and finds ways for them to surpass their own expectations . . . [she] not only keeps her students on track, but she promotes their inner genius . . . Every student in the class, regardless of performance, feels special and important."



**Deanne Schufft, Ernest Stapleton Elementary**

"This year I have seen a side of my child I haven't seen in a long time: a smile and a drive to go to school."

"Hayden has generally performed about average academically, up until this year. Mrs. Schufft has helped him challenge himself and excel. We also have been very impressed with her tendency to treat her students like loved members of her family . . ."

# Teacher Appreciation Award Recipients

## Elementary Schools:

### Gina Hanosh, Maggie Cordova Elementary

"Ms. Hanosh is a funny teacher. She works hard to get us the things we need. I learn from Ms. Hanosh. We get to dissect frogs. Ms. Hanosh earns all the money for our frogs . . . She makes us work hard. We read so much. Ms. Hanosh is happy when I have a question."



### Allison Salaz, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary

"Mrs. Salaz cares about her students because she understands all students learn at different levels . . . She explains things different ways so that all of us can learn."

"She is flawless in instructional delivery with a tone that begs students to listen for what's next. She shows students that a love of learning can take them to magical places and fill their minds with wonder and desire."

### John Turrietta, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary

"Mr. T. has a knack for making what they are learning "real" for the students. For example, the class has its own system of government . . . This application has been especially relevant since this was a presidential election year. . . Another awesome project has is the classroom garden. The students . . . Recently had a "lettuce taco party" to eat what they grew! I appreciate Mr. T. helping to make his students into well-rounded individuals through real-life experiences."



### Anna Mayberry, Puesta del Sol Elementary

"Mrs. Mayberry puts 100% into everything she does. She doesn't just teach the kids from the curriculum. She teaches them to love and appreciate themselves . . . because she knows how important it is to realize believing in themselves is key to their lifelong success."

"Anna makes it a point to learn from her students . . . The students feel so much pride when they teach her something new!"

### Erin O'Toole, Rio Rancho Elementary

"She encouraged the kids to come up with lyrics to a song they created to remember things like the solar system and made the environment fun in the classroom. She makes her classroom truly welcoming to any kid or parent . . ."

"When returning from an extended break, she asks each student what they did . . . [then] went so far as to write each student a personal note, i.e. . . . " ...the memories you make are precious, you will treasure them always."



## **Gina Rodriguez, Sandia Vista Elementary**

"There was a veteran project that the students had to do . . . Each student had to interview and make a presentation on a veteran. This is something EVERY student should do. . . With our nation going through transitions right now, the kids (about this age) are finding it hard to understand what they are seeing or hearing. Allowing them to research these subjects [social injustice/inequality] and start learning how to love each other despite differences is HUGE!"



## **Yvette Lujan-Flores, Vista Grande Elementary**

"Ms. Lujan-Flores . . . Is very loving, very thorough, and very organized. My daughter is doing well under her guidance, and Ms. Lujan-Flores is always professional and responsive to parent concerns and questions . . . [she] always shows students respect and expects them to show her respect."

## **Middle Schools:**

### **Laura Tucker, Eagle Ridge Middle School**

"Ms. Tucker became [my son's] new Life Science and CCR teacher this semester. She has helped him so much . . . He . . . Is getting all B's and a C' which I can't tell you how excited I am. He went from all F's to these grades in a matter of a month just because this teacher went above and beyond to help my son. I can't thank her enough."



### **Erin Lopez, Lincoln Middle School**

"Ms. Lopez always makes us laugh and think deeply about our answers and what we are learning about."

"She is friendly, stresses kindness, and makes sure everyone is on task and understands."

"Mrs. Lopez . . . makes learning fun, easy, and safe. Her lessons are easily understood . . . The students often use computers to do research and work."

### **Lauren Zabicki, Mountain View Middle School**

"Ms. Zabicki is the teacher that all students need and want. She cares about their well-being, academics, future plans, social/emotional development, and engaging them during instruction . . . She conducts lab experiments to give students exposure to real experience and how science plays into their world . . . She can tell you something academic and personal about every student in her class."



### **Dolores Vigil, Rio Rancho Middle School**

"She is always taking her time to help us and show us things until we understand. You can tell she is nice, funny, and cares about her students . . . Because she is the best teacher on this world . . . She is an AAA+++++++ teacher."

# Teacher Appreciation Award Recipients

## High Schools:

### Sevda Bahadirli, Independence High School

"Ms. Bahadirli is an extraordinary social studies teacher who has a great rapport with students . . . Some of our students wanted an Agriculture elective, so she created one. The students in the class cultivated plants on our campus and participated in the Great American Clean Up."



### Mary Danos, Rio Rancho Cyber Academy

"The students love her, especially the sixth-grade students, whom she watches out for with tender loving care . . . Mary takes students along with other teachers to the Bachechi Center for hands-on experiences in collecting data for a long term phenology (seasonal change) study that contributes to national scientific databases."

### Leslie Keeney, Rio Rancho High School

"The students are considered high level thinkers and [Ms. Keeney] treats them as such. She values their involvement in the classroom . . . Not only has she prepared my daughter for college writing, but has helped her prepare for interviews with Congressmen and Senators. . . . I could not have helped my child the way this woman has helped her."



### Rozeneh Taylor, V. Sue Cleveland High School

"Hannah was challenged with high expectations but enjoyed Ms. Taylor's class so much she didn't mind the workload . . . Hannah finds herself enjoying Government even though it was a class she was not looking forward to . . . it is her favorite simply because of how Mrs. Taylor treats her class . . . My son learned to write because of Mrs. Taylor. Every paper he has had to write since the 10th grade is an example of what a great teacher Mrs. Taylor is."

## About the Teacher Appreciation Program

Teacher Appreciation honorees were chosen based upon nominations submitted by students and parents at each teacher's school. The nominations were reviewed by a committee consisting of the program's sponsors from the Sanchez and Piñon Law Firm and other business leaders in Rio Rancho, principals from each grade level, and members of the RRPS Strategic Planning and Engagement Office. The chosen teachers were "surprised" at a staff meeting at their school, where members of the selection committee recognized all of the nominated teachers from that school and presented the award to the chosen recipient.

The committee and sponsors thank all of the parents and students who submitted nominations. Any of the teachers nominated would have been worthy winners, and the committee had to make some tough choices. In fact, in one case with a school with a large number of nominees, the committee deadlocked and declared a tie!

# In Appreciation: Our Recognition Celebration Sponsors



**Brandon McFatridge**  
Membership Development  
Representative  
bmcfatridge@nusennda.org

Administrative Center  
P.O. Box 8530  
Albuquerque, NM 87198  
Phone 505-889-5107  
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nusennda.org



**Abigail A. Gonzales**  
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**David B. Cruz**  
Assistant Manager  
505.338.2000  
1275 Unser Blvd. NE  
Rio Rancho, NM 87144  
DavidC@FrenchFunerals.com  
www.FrenchFunerals.com




**Brenton L. Fewox LUTCF, IAR**  
Financial Advisor  
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4061 Ridgerock Road, Rio Rancho, NM 87124  
www.oldrepublictitle.com/nm







**Anthony Del Angel, D.C.**  
drtony@gonstead-nm.com  
owner

EAST: 505.884.8584  
8001 Wyoming Blvd NE, Suite D-4  
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For this very special celebration, Anita Sanchez and Aaron Piñon invited other Rio Rancho businesses and individuals to join them in sponsoring prizes for Teacher Appreciation honorees and the recipients of the staff recognition award. We hope you will take the time to thank them for their support of our schools and students.

# Staff Members Chosen for Special Recognition

Every year, each school and the RRPS district office choose a staff member for special recognition whose service during the preceding school year has been exemplary. These staff members, who can be teachers, custodians, members of the office staff, or administrators, receive a certificate and are recognized at the district's annual Recognition Dinner in May. We are proud to once again recognize them here. The names below are listed in alphabetical order.



Miriah Affentranger (Rio Rancho High), Svetlana Alderson (Maggie Cordova Elementary), Cheryl Anaya (Ernest Stapleton Elementary), Lynne Bagby (Mountain View Middle), Sevda Bahadirli (Independence High), Cindy Crouch (Colinas del Norte Elementary), Elaine Grassberger (Vista Grande Elementary), Cristlerose Helvie (Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary), Jessica Hammonds (RRPS District Office), John Jones (Cielo Azul Elementary), Clavel Kole (Shining Stars Preschool), Andrea Marquez (Rio Rancho Elementary), Margaret Miller (Puesta del Sol Elementary), Shawna Mitchell (Rio Rancho Cyber Academy), Bonnie Serna (Lincoln Middle School), Lori Sturgess (Cleveland High), Tammy Sunstrom (Enchanted Hills Elementary), Laura Tucker (Eagle Ridge Middle), Veronica Valdez (Sandia Vista Elementary), Dolores Vigil (Rio Rancho Middle School)

