



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Richards, Morales named Goose Creek CISD Teachers of the Year

Belinda Morales of Ashbel Smith has been named Elementary Teacher of the Year and Robin Richards of Sterling High has been named Secondary Teacher of the Year for Goose Creek CISD.

Both teachers will represent Goose Creek CISD as its nominees in the 2010 Region IV Education Service Center Teacher of the Year competition, a step toward Texas Teacher of the Year to be announced later in the year.

Also, Christina Langhorne of Crockett Elementary School was named this year's James Becker Thomson Award winner, which is presented annually to a Goose Creek CISD teacher for excellence in special education.

Chosen by their peers as "stars" from their respective schools, Teachers of the Year from each campus were also honored at the Thursday night celebration at Goose Creek Memorial High School.

Goose Creek CISD Campus Teachers of the Year for 2010 at the elementary level include Judy Jirrels, Alamo; Barbi Mitchell, B.P. Hopper; Adriana Herevia, Crockett; Catherine Rangel, Carver; Aaron Berklund, Highlands; Sheryl Ford, Harlem; Lilia Gomez Tinoco, Bowie; Brenda Clem, De Zavala; Kristi Warren, De Zavala; Ruth Perez, Lamar; Sarah Bell, San Jacinto; Carol Colvin, Austin; Elba Pagan, Travis; and Tammy Marshall, Walker.

Campus Teachers of the Year from the secondary schools include Jerry Shafer, Baytown Junior; Judy Mackyeon, Cedar Bayou Junior; Sharla Bigler, Gentry Junior; K. Nicole Bright, Highlands Junior; Noemi C. Liggett, Horace Mann Junior; Lea Ann Gardner, Lee High; Patti Bell, Goose Creek Memorial High; BJ McCoy, School Community Guidance Center; Wilda Archangel Neal, Peter E. Hyland Center; and Jonathan Mark Garrett, Stuart Career Center.

"Educating our children is one of the most noble and important professions in America. Teachers make a significant impact each and every day on the lives of our children," said Goose Creek CISD Superintendent Dr. Toby York. "Thanks to each of you for all that you do for Goose Creek CISD students."

Robin Richards Secondary Teacher of the Year

Goose Creek CISD Secondary Teacher of the Year Robin Richards says she loves her students and their well-being is one of her priorities in life. "I believe I would not be a successful teacher if I did not care about my students and making connections. Teaching is a career, not a job," she said.

Robin has taught at Sterling High School for nine years, and has taught freshman English, Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Psychology, and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID).

She is perhaps best known as the Sterling High School AVID campus coordinator. AVID is a preparatory program to help students enhance their chances of going to college by improving their academic focus and organizational skills.

She said she was enormously surprised she was chosen for such an honorable award.



Belinda Morales
Elementary Teacher of the Year



Robin Richards
Secondary Teacher of the Year

Belinda Morales Elementary Teacher of the Year

Goose Creek CISD Elementary Teacher of the Year Belinda Morales has been a bilingual first grade teacher with Goose Creek CISD for 13 years. She currently teaches at Ashbel Smith Elementary.

"I am so honored being selected campus and elementary Teacher of the Year," she said. "I am grateful that I have worked with so many wonderful administrators, principals, assistant principals, teachers, custodians and cafeteria workers in Goose Creek CISD."

Belinda's path to the classroom is not the usual tale. She credits her family for her decision to attend college and become a teacher. "I believe that we all have a calling in life and my calling was definitely teaching and mentoring," she said.

As a migrant farm worker, Belinda says her parents instilled in her that an education was a major part of family life. "They were always encouraging us to go to school and do well. Their main goal in life for their seven children was to complete high school and graduate," Belinda said.

Two of her siblings, who were 12 and 14 years older, were also instrumental in her going to college.

"My two older siblings, Anna and Benito, were the first two in my family that went to college and set the model for not just a high school diploma but a college degree. My family encouraged me to overcome our poverty," she said. "I wanted to become a bilingual teacher because I wanted to help educate other children like me that migrated to several states for income. Both my parents were U.S. citizens that had immigrant parents and both went to school only up to the seventh grade. My parents, grandparents and great-grandparents were all migrant farm workers. My parents did not want the same thing for their children so they always enrolled us in school in every state they worked in for money picking tomatoes, apples, strawberries, and pickles. They encouraged us to always treat people with respect and dignity even if they did not treat us the same way. I learned how to help people that needed help because my parents taught us how to give to others despite the fact we were poor."

Belinda said she knew she could make a difference educating children with

“Winning this award was a ray of sunshine. I had spent the afternoon reading reflective essays written by my seniors describing their incredible years as AVID students,” Robin said. “This is always a bitter-sweet time for me. I am excited about them (my students) moving on to college, yet sad that I will no longer have them in my classroom. I was blessed when I was chosen seven years ago to participate in the AVID program at Sterling High School.”

Helping first generation college-bound students get into the college of their dreams is the most exhilarating experience, she said. “I am proud of them and appreciative of the support that I continuously receive from my site team and from the district.”

Robin got into teaching after a short stint as a licensed medical technician, and a medical technologist. She was happy, but not fulfilled.

“So at the age of 29, I began taking courses at Lee College. I had experienced an epiphany! I wanted to teach,” Robin said. “Ten years later, I became the first one in my family to graduate from college, and I landed my first teaching job as an English teacher.”

“I have been fulfilled ever since,” she said.

backgrounds similar to her’s and could empower parents by teaching them and showing them that an education is something any child can attain if they have the support from family and teachers that care. “Teaching and mentoring is my passion in life,” she said.

Christina Langhorne
James Becker Thomson Award

James Becker Thomson Award winner Christina Langhorne has been a teacher with Goose Creek for seven years. The award is presented annually to a Goose Creek CISD teacher for excellence in special education. Christina currently teaches at Crockett Elementary School.

“It is such an honor,” she said. “It means a lot to me that my work has reached beyond my classroom walls to inspire others. My goal each day is to bring my best to the classroom to show those around me that there is so much to love about learning. To pass on knowledge is an incredible thing, but to also pass on wonder that entices a child, or an adult, to be a life-long learner... that means the world to me.”

In her nomination letter, Crockett Principal Jaime Lannou said, “Christina sees teaching special needs children as an opportunity to change the world by offering high quality intervention services to help these children bolster their strengths, minimize the effects of their weaknesses, meet their needs, and realize their goals. She is drawn to not only teaching students with special needs, but also to help others work with these students.”

Christina said becoming a special educator was a simple choice. “I can explore the wonder of the world in the company of some of the most intriguing and complex people you could ever meet,” she said. “I have the privilege of getting acquainted with them as their personalities emerge throughout early childhood.”

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