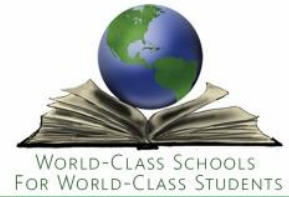


MONROVIA

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 1, 2017

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Monrovia High Administrator Receives Award for Outstanding Citizenship, Commitment to Student Success

MONROVIA – Susan Hirsch, the architect behind Monrovia High School’s Wellness Center, says you must view the world through the eyes of others to facilitate healing and change.

With this outlook, Hirsch transforms the lives of students and families throughout Monrovia and, on Jan. 20, earned the City’s Chamber of Commerce Iris Award, Monrovia’s equivalent of a Citizen of the Year Award.

“I believe there is so much good in the world, and I’ve always wanted to show that to students who oftentimes don’t receive these positive life affirmations,” Hirsch said. “To help students who are struggling, I have had many personal life experiences that allow me to view the world through their eyes and thereby adjust the support we provide to fit their needs.”

Throughout her 30 years of service in Monrovia Unified, Hirsch has served first as a special education teacher, then as an administrator creating and leading intervention programs for at-risk students and establishing parent education opportunities through the Adult Education program. She also currently serves as a Community Services Commissioner for the City of Monrovia and as the education coordinator for the Healing Connections Task Force – a California School Board Association Golden Bell recipient for innovative and effective programs.

Hirsch drew on her skills in working with at-risk students to develop Monrovia High School’s Wellness Center, which is in its first year of operation. The center offers students and their families mental health support, counseling, tutoring, family support, a voluntary pro-active probation program, family/parent education programs in English and Spanish, and serves as a quiet place for students to decompress and obtain the support they need.

“Susan is such an inspiration, and our students are very lucky to have her,” MUSD Board President Bryan Wong said. “It is through leaders like her that we are able to make a difference in the lives of our students. She is so deserving of the Monrovia Iris Award.”

MORE

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OUR MISSION

Inspire students to engage in meaningful learning in a safe and nurturing environment that embraces diversity.

Challenge students to be ethical, productive members and leaders of the community.

OUR VISION

Our students will be ethical, compassionate individuals who:

- graduate from high school prepared for college and career,
- contribute and adapt to an ever-changing world by being resourceful and responsible citizens, and
- embrace diversity.

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Hirsch grew up observing life from varying vantage points, from the time she supported her African-American teammates by boycotting the local soda fountain shop when they were refused service, to attending upscale gala events in Washington D.C. when her father completed national engineering projects for President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

She said her most difficult experiences taught her the most and forged her path of service, using these lessons daily as she helps students and families navigate life's most challenging times. Hirsch has personally dealt with the hardship of losing her two brothers to alcohol and drugs but uses their tragic example as motivation to others.

After 40 years of what she terms a "magical marriage and family" with her husband, Alan, and daughter, Samara, she faced her most difficult challenge when cancer took Alan's life.

"When I see a student or family struggling, I try to think of everything that might have helped my brothers through their troubles," she said. "I know Alan would be proud of all the work we are doing to ensure students and members of our community have the best life possible, and we are just getting started."

Monrovia Unified is committed to providing top-notch educators and life coaches like Hirsch to support all students in every facet of education and life.

"Susan leads with heart. Her students are nourished with her compassion and thrive with her guidance," MUSD Superintendent Dr. Katherine Thorossian said. "It is through educators like her that Monrovia Unified can offer such unique support systems for students and families."

PHOTO CAPTION

020117_MUSD_IRIS: Monrovia High School Intervention Coordinator Susan Hirsch (left) stands with 2015 Iris Award recipient Janet Wall on Jan. 20 after Hirsch earned herself the city's Chamber of Commerce 2016 Iris Award, Monrovia's equivalent of a Citizen of the Year Award.

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