



Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 14, 2022 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-273-9840

Whittier Union Recognizes Frontier High School History Educator as 2022-23 Teacher of the Year

WHITTIER – The Whittier Union High School District has named Frontier High School social studies teacher Mary Ann Fajardo as its 2022-23 teacher of the year, honoring the instructor who is beloved and respected by students and peers for her humility, love of learning and willingness to share her knowledge and research.

Fajardo has proven to be an indispensable member of the Frontier High faculty, promoting diversity and inclusion in her curriculum and engaging her students with rich experiences. Fajardo's Orientation class serves as an inspirational springboard for new students, while her Guided Studies class in the school year's final quarter encourages seniors to keep pushing ahead to reach their goal of graduation.

"I am overwhelmed by the honor," Fajardo said. "I am thankful for the support of my Frontier High administrators, especially Margie Moriarty and Richard Rodriguez. They trust you and give you everything you need to make your lesson plan successful. Also, our counselors Roberto Tamayo and Roxanna Kharaud, the social studies department and the entire Frontier High staff, whose collaboration, guidance and support means the world to me. I would also like to thank my students for their compassion and love for learning."

Fajardo is in her ninth year of teaching at Frontier High, which along with Sierra Vista High School and Whittier Union Adult School forms the United Sierra Education Center (USEC). Fajardo teaches U.S. and World History, Career Studies, Chicano Studies and is part of the Whittier Union team that developed the District's Ethnic Studies curriculum.

Fajardo serves as a leader for the California Continuation Education Association (CCEA) Model Continuation School certification process, reviewing and managing applications and leading school site visits; she is also a CCEA 2022 Teacher of the Year candidate.

Fajardo traveled to Germany in 2019 as part of the Checkpoint Charlie Foundation/Museum of Tolerance program, "Diversity and Tolerance in Berlin – The Past, the Present and the Future." There, she joined five other Los Angeles-based educators to receive first-hand accounts of the Holocaust by survivors, eyewitnesses and scholars.

Fajardo's Holocaust research led her to a little-known, man-made famine, known as the Holodomor, which killed millions of Ukrainians in the 1930s. Looking into the stories of Holodomor survivors, Fajardo compiled a list of eyewitness accounts that became the basis of a lesson plan, "The Holodomor and Its Children," that she teaches in the third quarter of the school year.

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Teaching the Holodomor allows Fajardo’s students to develop empathy for the victims and inspires them to speak out about human rights abuses. Fajardo was recognized with a Holodomor Research and Education Consortium Educator Award in 2021 for her lesson plan. Fajardo’s dedication to research and academics also earned her a Michael LaPrade Holocaust Education Institute fellowship.

“We are thrilled to see Mary Ann receive this honor, which recognizes the tremendous work that she does on behalf of our students, as well as shining a light on her passionate work as a humanitarian,” USEC Principal Margie Moriarty said. “The work Mary Ann does to ensure that survivors’ voices continue to be heard, as well as her dedication to helping students realize they can achieve at the highest levels, inspires us all. Congratulations to Mary Ann from the entire staff of the United Sierra Education Center.”

PHOTO CAPTION

WUHSD_TEACHEROFYEAR1: Frontier High School U.S. and World History teacher Mary Ann Fajardo has been named as the Whittier Union High School District’s 2022-23 Teacher of the Year, honoring the instructor who is adored by her students and valued and respected by colleagues and administrators.

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OUR MISSION:

The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

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