



# Fontana Unified School District

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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Fontana Unified's JROTC Program Receives Top Honors from U.S. Marine Corps

**FONTANA, CA** – The Fontana High School Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) program has been designated as the Region 4 Marine Corps Reserve Association (MCRA) Honor unit, one of only four schools in the U.S. to receive the designation for the 2021-22 school year. This is the third time FOHI has received the MCRA, the Marine Corps' highest unit award, and it is the first MCRA designation since 1999.

FOHI was also named a Naval Honor School (NHS) for the fourth consecutive year, reflecting the program's continued excellence in training young students to become role models and community leaders. FOHI has been named an NHS for the 16th time. The awards are presented by the Commanding General of the Marine Corps Training and Education Command.

"The MCRA unit award represents the consistency over time of all the cadets in the program," FOHI MCJROTC LtCol R.D. Meelarp said. "Earning MCRA designation Honor Unit is like being named your school's valedictorian. It is an accomplishment that could not have been possible without the unwavering support of the families, staff, administration, school district and community."

Each year, the Marine Corps receives reports from approximately 270 MCJROTC units from across the country. The reports detail what activities MCJROTC cadets have been involved in over the previous school year, including sports, clubs, community service, scholarships, enlistments, competitions, leadership camps and field trips.

MCJROTC programs that are found to be in the top 20% nationwide earn an NHS designation. The best unit in each of the four regions earn MCRA designations.

Motivation, determination and dedication are the three qualities of a top-performing MCJROTC cadet, according to FOHI MCJROTC MSgt W.K. Harkley. These qualities were in abundance for the MCJROTC marksmanship team during the 2021-22 school year, as they won several regional competitions held in Arizona and Utah and qualified for two separate national championship contests.

Founded in 1991, FOHI's MCJROTC program aims to strengthen students' character, self-discipline habits, and provide leadership experience while also engaging students in activities such as marksmanship, color guard, drill team, community service and more. Students can join as early as their freshman year, taking courses that satisfy various graduation requirements.

Last year, FOHI's program included approximately 125 cadets, many of whom were active in school activities, clubs and student leadership. Their volunteer efforts included supporting a nationally

televised NASCAR event, during which cadets put in approximately 1,168 hours and gained experience that then helped them plan and execute hosted events, awards nights, a senior dinner and other ceremonies, all while using the six-step Marine Corps Planning Process. In the last year, the cadets have collectively put in 4,235 hours of community service, were awarded nearly \$975,000 in scholarships and enlistments, and earned 71 academic awards.

The program's status as a Naval Honor School allows the MCJROTC unit to nominate cadets for the U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, and the U.S. Military Academy. The nomination from FOHI's MCJROTC instructors carries equal weight as a letter of recommendation from a House of Representatives or U.S. Senate member.

"Fontana High School's Marine Corps JROTC program has been a source of pride throughout our community for more than 30 years," Fontana High School Principal Ofelia Hinojosa said. "I can't say enough about the leadership provided by MSgt Harkley and LtCol Meelarp, who work so well with our cadets, and provide them with skills that will help them become our community leaders of the future."

**PHOTO CAPTION:**

**FUSD\_FOHI\_MCJROTC:** Fontana High School's Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) program has received two distinguished honors from the U.S. Marine Corps: designation as a Region 4 Marine Corps Reserve Association (MCRA) Honor unit and recognition as a Naval Honor School.

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