



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 8, 2017

CONTACT: Juliette Funes

Maritza Fairfield

(909) 445-1001

Whittier Union Student Artists' Work Earn Accolades at Harmony Center Art Competition

WHITTIER – Whittier Union High School District's award-winning visual and performing arts (VAPA) program continues to set the bar for creativity and excellence after several Whittier Union students won awards and accolades at the eighth annual Harmony Center Fine Art and Craft Fair's High School Art Contest on Oct. 22.

La Serna High senior Elizabeth Islas, Santa Fe High senior Kristine Khan Nguyen, Pioneer High sophomore Ismael Mora and La Serna senior Jennifer Peña took home top prizes in four of the five categories, which varied from 3-D to photography. Honorable mentions went to Santa Fe's Griselda Rodriguez and Pioneer students Berenice Alvarez and Jazmine Alize Ferrer.

Taking home the People's Choice Award for her painting was Frontier High School's Meiling Clavesilla.

"It was exciting being able to express myself and share my creativity with the community," Clavesilla said. "I was shocked to win this award, but it gave me a lot of motivation to continue moving forward."

Students from the Whittier area submitted nearly 100 art pieces to compete in the annual event, which serves as a fundraising event for the Interfaith Food Center and highlights the work of local artisans and crafters, student artists and musicians.

"We are very proud of our students for earning top-place awards in this contest and for pursuing art as a means of expression," said Pioneer High ceramics teacher Jennifer Sanchez, who is beginning her second year as the District's VAPA coordinator, a new post aimed at fostering quality arts instruction.

"Our teachers are so supportive of our students and always encourage them to enter their works in competitions year-round to share their talents with the community," said Sanchez, who notifies schools about upcoming events, contests and performances – ensuring that students and their talents are given the opportunity to shine.

"Making art is a wonderful thing for me and it is something that I feel everyone should have a chance to do," said Islas, who won first place in the landscape and still life category for her painting and has been recognized for winning the 38th District Congressional Art Competition last year.

For Nguyen, art comes naturally: "By the time I realize it, I'm already halfway through a sketch."

Ferrer said that while her landscape artwork didn't take a top prize, it was a proud moment for her to be recognized.

"When I finish a piece, I feel proud of what I've done because it's my work coming from my hands," she said. "I express myself, my experiences and emotions through my art. When people ask me what art means to me, my answer is always, everything."

As part of fostering a well-rounded VAPA program, Whittier Union offers an array of courses in areas that range from 3D art and design, theater arts and video production, to drill team, choir and jazz. Students have performed in such venues as Carnegie Hall and the Walt Disney Concert Hall and have participated in the Pasadena's Tournament of Roses Parade. Students also participate in local and national arts competitions.

"We strongly support enhancing and strengthening the arts in Whittier Union, keeping it alive through a variety of classes and providing our students a multitude of options to explore their artistic talents," Superintendent Martin Plourde said. "Our visual and performing arts program has continued to flourish due to the dedication of our talented teachers and staff, who have created an environment in which our students can blossom."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

110817_WUHSD_HARMONY1: Frontier High School's Meiling Clavesilla won the People's Choice Award for her painting at the eighth annual Harmony Center Fine Art and Craft Fair's High School Art Contest on Oct. 22. Students from the Whittier area submitted nearly 100 art pieces to compete in the annual event, with several Whittier Union students taking home awards and accolades for their artwork.

110817_WUHSD_HARMONY2: Winners and Honorable Mention recipients from the eighth annual Harmony Center Fine Art and Craft Fair's High School Art Contest included students from La Serna, Santa Fe, Pioneer and Frontier high schools. Whittier Union students took home top prizes in four of the five categories, which varied from 3-D to photography.

###

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.

WUHSD Board of Trustees

Tim Schneider, *President* ■ Dr. Ralph S. Pacheco, *Vice President* ■ Russell Castañeda Calleros, *Clerk* ■ Jeff Baird, *Member* ■ Leighton Anderson, *Member*
Martin Plourde, *Superintendent*

9401 S. Painter Avenue, Whittier, California 90605-2798 ■ (562) 698-8121 ■ www.wuhsd.org