



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Kathy Jo Gutierrez to represent NLMUSD at annual ceremony**

## **District Teacher of the Year Honored by County**

Becoming a teacher wasn't always in Kathy Jo Gutierrez's life plan. In fact, the La Pluma Elementary School teacher wanted to be a journalist.

"My sorority sisters were teachers and they came home to create their lesson plans and prepare for class, and I helped them," Gutierrez said. "I was in a room with a bunch of teachers, and through osmosis, I was hooked and have been ever since."

Gutierrez's change in her life plan has paid off rather well as she was honored Friday, Sept. 19 by the Los Angeles County Department of Education at the annual Teachers of the Year luncheon.

The largest competition of its kind, the Los Angeles County Teachers of the Year programs recognizes teachers who show exemplary dedication to their students, practice compelling classroom lessons, receive positive accomplishments and show unwavering commitment to their profession.

"Our teachers are some of the hardest-working in the entire state," said NLMUSD Board of Education President Margarita Rios. "Mrs. Gutierrez is among the county's elite and this honor is just a testament to her talent and investment in her students."

At NLMUSD, Gutierrez was honored as the District's Teacher of the Year for her work at Moffit Elementary, where she worked before moving to La Pluma this year. It was an accomplishment that, until now, she thought was out of reach. She said she figured there are so many talented and committed teachers in the District, she didn't have a chance.

At the urging of Moffit Elementary School Principal Maureen Bixby, however, Gutierrez threw her hat into the ring.

"I have known Kathy Jo for many years – she is a star," said Interim Superintendent Ginger Shattuck. "I am very proud of her accomplishments."

Gutierrez – who teaches a first- and second-grade combination class – graduated from California State University, Fullerton with a bachelor’s degree in communications with an emphasis in journalism. She earned her teaching credential from UCLA and a master’s degree in administration from Concordia University.

For Gutierrez, her students are “little gifts” who she wants to see excel and reach their goals, whether they have 20 goals for the year or only two.

In her quest to help her students meet and exceed her high expectations, Gutierrez has taken on a superhero theme in her classroom. She encourages them to be the best they can be while rewarding them with wearing a superhero cape.

“I just want to be a better teacher today than I was yesterday,” she said. “And I want them to be better students today than they were yesterday. When they leave me, I want them to leave with a sense of accomplishment and high self-esteem. They are my superheroes.”

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