

PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Valerie Martinez

Juliette Funes

(909) 445-1001

Alliance for Children's Rights Honors Pomona Unified Superintendent for Community Service Work

POMONA – Pomona Unified Superintendent Richard Martinez was recognized for his years-long advocacy for children's rights with the prestigious Francis M. Wheat Community Service Award at the 24th Annual Alliance for Children's Rights dinner at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on March 10.

The Alliance for Children's Rights – a Hollywood-based nonprofit that strives to protect the rights of impoverished, abused and neglected children – lauded Martinez for being an education pioneer and champion of collaboration, urban education and foster children. The Francis M. Wheat Community Service Award is named for the Alliance's founder, who dedicated his life to serving children in need.

"This is a very humbling moment for me," said Martinez, a former foster youth. "To be honored with such a distinguished award, and to be among so many who have worked so hard to achieve a common goal – to make sure all children can be part of a loving family – is overwhelming. I would like to thank the Alliance for Children's Rights for all that they have done and pledge to them that I will continue to be a tenacious advocate for children everywhere."

The star-studded dinner, attended by a host of influential industry notables and celebrities, raised \$1.56 million for the Alliance. Past recipients of the award include Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, former LAPD Police Chief William Bratton, television producer Brenda Hampton and Echoes of Hope chief executive Stacia Robitaille.

"This is a tremendous honor for our superintendent, who constantly works to ensure that every single one of our students is safe, educated and cared for," PUSD Board of Education President Adrienne Konigar-Macklin said. "On behalf of the Board of Education, I want to congratulate Richard for all he has done to serve our children, including our most vulnerable, and commend his leadership and passion to inspiring the youth of our community to dream and achieve."

Martinez was born in Pico Rivera and attended public schools in East Los Angeles, graduating from Garfield High School in 1979. He worked as a crisis intervention counselor in Bell Gardens, serving five years in the police department providing crisis response and counseling services in the area of child abuse, domestic violence and gangs.

Martinez has been with Pomona Unified since 2001, serving as director of pupil resources, administrative director of personnel services, assistant superintendent of pupil and community services and deputy superintendent. He has been superintendent of schools since 2009, serving on many District, county and state boards and committees in school leadership, urban education, diversity, legislative policy, safety, guidance and child welfare.

He has presented at regional, state and national conference on topics such as student achievement, school climate, parent engagement and peer support.

PHOTO CAPTION:

ALLIANCE: Pomona Unified Superintendent Richard Martinez accepts the Francis M. Wheat Community Service Award at the 24th Annual Alliance for Children’s Rights dinner at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on March 10. Martinez was recognized for being an education pioneer and champion of collaboration, urban education and foster children.

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