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PRESS RELEASE

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**California High School's Julie Tonkovich
Receives CAEA Art Educator Award**

WHITTIER, CA – California High School art teacher Julie Tonkovich recently received the 2014 California Art Educator of the Year Award and was recognized by the National Art Education Association for her honor during its recent national convention in San Diego, CA.

Tonkovich's prestigious award from the California Art Education Association was determined through a peer review of nominations and honors an outstanding member whose service and contribution to art education merits recognition.

"This award is being given to recognize excellence in professional accomplishment and service by a dedicated art educator," said NAEA President Dennis Inhulsen. "Julie Tonkovich exemplifies the highly qualified art educators active in education today: leaders, teachers, students, scholars and advocates who give their best to their students and the profession."

A Cal High graduate, Tonkovich has taught art at her alma mater since 1992 and recently renewed her National Board Certification, an advanced teaching credential, in 2013. Tonkovich says her goal is for her students to experience the joy of creating, responding to and sharing their art in the classroom.

"The arts provide for deeper learning while preparing students for the 21st century via critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration," Tonkovich said. "In the art classroom, I include an arts vocabulary to increase discernment, art production to communicate ideas, historical contexts to provide cultural frames of reference, philosophical inquiry to make informed judgments and extensions beyond the classroom to encourage global thinking."

Tonkovich teaches Art 1, 2 and 3 as well as Advance Placement Studio Art and Video and Cinematic Arts. She says she works hard to create an environment where students feel safe to express themselves through their art.

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"I begin the school year with community building," she said. "It's like the theme song from the old television show *Cheers* – 'you want to go where everybody knows your name.' Students are willing to take risks in a safe environment when they feel known and accepted."

California High School Principal Bill Schloss said Tonkovich provides her students with enriching opportunities to create works of art that go beyond the classroom through special art installation projects that take place in different locations on campus.

"Julie Tonkovich encourages our students to create meaningful artwork that speaks to students both in and outside of her classroom," Schloss said. "Her students' creative art installations get the whole campus talking about art."

NAEA is the professional association for art educators. Members include elementary, secondary, middle level and high school art teachers; university and college professors; education directors who oversee education in our nation's fine art museums, administrators and supervisors who oversee art education in school districts, state departments of education, arts councils; and teaching artists throughout the United States and many foreign countries.

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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