



PRESS RELEASE

Poway Unified School District

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Poway Unified Announces 2023 ‘PUSD Volunteers of the Year’

Jennifer Basinger, Mechele Chadwick, and Debra Surber Receive School District Honors

(San Diego, CA) – The Poway Unified School District (PUSD) is proud to announce that **Jennifer Basinger**, Shoal Creek Elementary School Volunteer; **Mechele Chadwick**, Creekside Elementary School Volunteer; and **Debra Surber**, Twin Peaks Middle School Volunteer have all been chosen as the PUSD Volunteers of the Year for 2023.

Schools across Poway Unified had the opportunity to nominate their site’s Volunteer of the Year for District level recognition. The nominations were reviewed by a committee of District staff and the selections are based on the impact an individual has had on their entire school community, the dedication of their own time for the benefit of all students and teachers at their school, and the outcome of their efforts. Poway Unified volunteers are pivotal to the success of school events and programs, such as clubs, athletics, arts, fundraisers, and student enrichment.

Jennifer Basinger, Shoal Creek Elementary School

Jennifer brings a positive, energetic enthusiasm to the Shoal Creek campus daily. She puts the interests of students first in all that she does, supports site administration and staff, and is always working to bring the Shoal Creek community together. She has been specially impactful through her support of the No Place For Hate Team and Student Committee at Shoal Creek. She worked with students to hear their ideas for the campus and fostered a safe place for brainstorming. Her support of the initiative ensured that each classroom received a No Place for Hate Book and continued the community building activities such as Strictly No Elephants and the Great Kindness Challenge.

She has established many ‘firsts’ at Shoal Creek this year such as the Let Your Kindness Glow family dance and bingo nights. When the PTA president was unable to fulfil duties because of illness, Jennifer was the one to step up and continue the charge. Shoal Creek is excited to have her as the PTA President next year.



Jennifer Basinger, Shoal Creek Elementary School

Mechele Chadwick, Creekside Elementary

Creekside Elementary has been lucky to have Mechele in their community as a volunteer for 10 years. Over these years she has been an active member of the PTA, has trained other parent volunteers, and has had significant involvement in many community events such as the annual campus and community favorite – Creepside, a Halloween event. She was instrumental in Creepside’s post-COVID return, investing hundreds of hours.

Mechele also leads the campus art program, Art Attack and trains volunteers who want to participate in the program. Through Art Attack, she leads clay molding project lessons for every grade, a unique experience at the elementary school level. At the end of the lesson, each student takes home a clay project that she fired in a kiln.

Mechele has spent countless hours dedicated to Creekside’s staff, community, and students. She is constantly fostering an open, welcoming community and has others in mind in all that she does.



Mechele Chadwick, Creekside Elementary School

Debra Surber, Twin Peaks Middle School

Debra, or Deb as the staff know her by, has supported schools in Poway Unified as a volunteer for many years. Although she is being recognized as the Twin Peaks volunteer this year, she has dedicated hours of her time at Poway High School as well. Her hours spent at campus-wide book fairs, registration days and other events allow Deb to be a pivotal part of the school community.

Perhaps the biggest impact Deb has made at Twin Peaks this year is through the ‘Free Fashion Closet’ clothing drive that she organized. This initiative worked to increase students’ sense of belonging and remove barriers for lower income students. The clothing drive was formal wear specific and allowed students in need to ‘shop’ for free for formal and semi-formal school events such as dances, academic awards, and promotion. Deb ensured all students would benefit by seeking and acquiring clothes for all sizes and genders, and students felt empowered to support one another by donating their gently used items.

In all Deb does she remains a constant advocate and voice for the students of Twin Peaks Middle School, working to make the campus more equitable and conscious of the needs of all students.



Debra Surber, Twin Peaks Middle School

2023 Poway Unified School Site Volunteers of the Year

Congratulations to all of our site Volunteers of the Year – each individual gives their own time and resources to provide the best opportunities for our students, staff, and communities.

Adobe Bluffs Elementary School	Sarah Pemble
Bernardo Heights Middle School	Jennifer Brailsford
Black Mountain Middle School	Diana Godbold
Canyon View Elementary School	Casey Sullivan
Chaparral Elementary School	Leslie Alvarez
Connect Academy	Katy Brant
Creekside Elementary School	Mechele Chadwick*
Career Technical Education	Mark Pilcher
Deer Canyon Elementary School	Melissa Davis
Del Sur Elementary School	Erin Sikma
Design39Campus	Harshal Purohit-Patel
Garden Road Elementary School	Chris Knight
Highland Ranch Elementary School	Heather Lee
Los Peñasquitos Elementary	Kim Melvin
Mesa Verde Middle School	Jenell Lanski
Morning Creek Elementary School	Heather Speer
Monterey Ridge Elementary School	Alicai Prettyman
Mt. Carmel High School	Brett Alan Christlieb
Oak Valley Middle School	Cass Kaminetz
Painted Rock Elementary School	Stephanie Ellingsworth
Pomerado Elementary School	Roseanne Martin
Poway High School	Larry Ott
Poway to Palomar Middle College	Srini Kadali
Rancho Bernardo High School	Janell Riley
Shoal Creek Elementary	Jennifer Basinger*
Stone Ranch Elementary School	Tara Garrett
Sundance Elementary School	Jacque Benton
Sunset Hills Elementary School	Nadia Gaeta
Turtleback Elementary School	Katie DesBois
Tierra Bonita Elementary School	Elsie Russ
Twin Peaks Middle School	Debra Surber*
Westview High School	Christi Papworth

Westwood Elementary School	Lizeth Burkholder
Willow Grove Elementary School	Lindsey Radoff
Youth in Transition	North Coast Church

**Indicates District Level Volunteer of the Year*

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