Anaheim High School Teachers Awarded Five Grants for 2019-2020

It is the most in a single year by one local association since the program began

As schools opened in Anaheim this fall, a local NBC news station broadcast a report highlighting the work of a committed group of Anaheim educators at Western High School, who are helping students with Back-to-School anxiety.

The news reported that “The high school hosted an event with a student-based program called the ‘Link Crew’ that helps incoming freshmen make connections.” The group of dedicated educators who make up the Link Crew staff are grateful for the support their program has received from CTA members through their voluntary dues contributions to the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning.

Since 2016, Anaheim Secondary TA members have received 11 IFT grants worth nearly $190,000. This year’s grants include:

- **A New Way to Grow Food**, $20,000 | Samuel Jaramillo
  Western High
- **Pio Partners Mentor Outreach**, $20,000 | Monique Flores
  Western High
- **Katella Film Academy**, $19,999 | John Bautista, Katella High
- **ED Talks**, $4,975 | Nicole Montoy, Katella High
- **Communities United Through Bilingualism (COMUNIDADES UNIDAS A TRAVES DEL BILINGUISMO)**, $20,000 | Ryan Ruelas, Anaheim High

2019-2020 Grant Recipients Already Making an Impact

Moreno Valley College’s Jennifer Escobar, assistant professor of English, is working with four other educators and 30 secondary and postsecondary students from Val Verde and Moreno Valley school districts on an ambitious oral history project.

Jennifer, a member of the Riverside Community College District Faculty Association, was awarded a 2019-2020 Impact Grant of $18,480 to bring her strength-based project to life. It is only the second Community College grant in the ten years of the IFT Grant program.

As designed, classroom educators will participate in a year-long community of practice centered on the topics of oral history and meaningful classroom conversations and will share what they have learned with their colleagues.

Each of the instructors, along with their students, will design their own classroom oral history project. The school teams will meet at **April 24, 2020 at 5 p.m.** in the Val Verde TA office in Perris to share their work. The event is open to the public and the IFT encourages you to attend.
**Teacher Think Tank Member Leads Staff Collaboration Around Student Strengths at Loma Vista Middle School**

*By: Alejandro Cisneros*

Through the CTA’s Institute for Teaching, teachers at Loma Vista Middle School in Riverside’s Alvord Unified School District are actively seeking to disrupt the status quo and reframe the way that they see their students.

During staff meetings, teacher Alejandro Cisneros, a member of Moreno Valley Think Tank, facilitates strength-based activities that aim to counter the deficit perspectives that pervade some school cultures.

At the first staff meeting, teachers were asked to identify the strengths of typically marginalized students like ELL’s, homeless, and SPED students and to give examples of why they wrote the strengths that they did. *(See photo above)*

When asked to reflect and discuss what they took away from this activity, teachers reminded each other that every aspect of a student’s personality can be viewed in a positive light and leveraged for academic gain. A teacher said that even though we do our best to treat all students with respect, the negative narrative can become toxic if left unchecked.

At the next meeting, teachers were asked to examine the ways that they respond to students misbehaving and whether these responses work to support the goals that we have for our students. Teachers discussed whether their reactions to students who broke rules were restorative or retributory.

In reflection, a teacher shared that we often forget that we aren’t dealing with little adults; we are dealing with children and should be keenly aware of and intentional with our actions.

When these students don’t show strengths and test teacher’s patience, our hope is that the staff will take a second to align their response to a perspective that heals damaged relationships rather than doling out punishment.

These conversations will be held at every staff meeting with the end goal of making our campus culture one that values students for the wealth of strengths that they bring.

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**“Educator Champion of the Week” Awarded as the Fresno TA Adopts New Member Recognition Program**

The IFT applauds the Fresno Teachers Association for their new member recognition program. FTA wrote on Facebook,

> “Congrats to our first-ever Educator Champion of the Week, Thomas Elementary School first-grade teacher, Tamika Tatum. Tamika won for being a positive force, not only for the students in her class, but for all students on campus. In addition to her work in the classroom, she is part of a group of teachers who are starting the first BSU club at a Fresno Unified elementary school.”

#EducatorChampionOfTheWeek

FTA’S work is patterned after the Ovation! Toolkit created in 2016 by the IFT’s South Bay Teacher Think Tank. To find out how your local Association can promote excellence in strength-based education in your schools, please go to the IFT website- www.teacherdrivenchange.org

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The CTA Institute for Teaching (IFT) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. IFT supports strength-based teacher driven change in school communities across California. Please contact IFT at 619-683-3990 or at ift@teacherdrivenchange.org