



Educational Services Center | 401 Nut Tree Rd. Vacaville, CA 95687 | (707) 453-6100

January 16, 2024

The Vacaville Unified School District proudly announces its Teacher and Classified Employee of the Year for 2023-2024.

Karen Hamrick, the lead custodian at Ernest Kimme Charter Academy and the Muzetta Thrower Adult Education Center, was honored as the Vacaville Unified School District's Classified Employee of the Year, and Vaca Peña Middle School English and Leadership teacher Jayne Geist was honored as the Vacaville Unified School District's Teacher of the Year.

Hamrick, a 17-year employee with the VUSD, handles the custodial duties at the two campuses and teaches the Introduction to Custodial Training Course at Adult Ed.

Tiffany Donahue, principal for Muzetta Thrower Adult Education Center, wrote in her nomination of Hamrick, "She is arguably the hardest worker I have ever seen in both areas of her custodial and instructor duties. Her selfless actions, caring ways, and organization are what have made adult school such a great place to work and such a great place to attend for our students."

"Karen goes beyond just being a campus custodian. Building strong relationships with students is a priority for her. She strongly believes in the power of a positive adult relationship with our students," Ami Blackstone, Kimme Charter Academy principal, wrote. "She can be seen laughing with kids, giving them "mom" talks or hugging them when upset. There is nothing she wouldn't do to ensure a kid has what they need."

Geist joined the VUSD four years ago as a long-term substitute at Vaca Peña, and as Colleen Moe, Vaca Peña Middle School principal, wrote in her nomination of Geist, "She quickly fell in step with the rest of the English department, and you would have thought she was a seasoned veteran teacher."

Geist was hired full-time the following school year, and according to Moe. "We knew she would be an awesome addition to the Vaca Peña Community."

Geist's colleagues describe her impact on the students as "the leader of leaders!" "A model teacher who has a large positive impact on our school and community," as "someone who does it all." "A mentor" and someone who "creates a classroom environment that nurtures not just academic achievement but also emotional intelligence and leadership skills."

Moe concluded her nomination by writing, "Ms. Geist's remarkable dedication to English and Leadership education has left a permanent mark on her students, which is why she deserves to be Teacher of the Year."

Superintendent Ed Santopadre said, "I am honored to work with such professionals as Karen and Jayne. I'm proud of their work and each school site's selection as teacher and classified employee of the year. We have a great team. "



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