



For Immediate Release

2012 Kent Awards Highlight Excellence and Innovation in Schools Across San Mateo County

Foster City, CA - April 11, 2012 -- The San Mateo County School Boards Association (SMCSBA), representing 22 school districts, the San Mateo Community College District, and the San Mateo County Office of Education, today announced the 2012 winners of the J. Russell Kent Awards.

The awards are given to outstanding and innovative programs either in the classroom or outside the classroom as well as district-wide programs. Applicants must demonstrate their programs promote student success, employ a high degree of creativity, and demonstrate transferability. Named after the past San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools, J. Russell Kent, SMCSBA initiated the J. Russell Kent Award Program in the 1980-81 school year.

The 2012 Kent Award winners include programs that focus on innovation in the areas of learning models, community service, environmental stewardship, special education, services for at-risk students, counseling and character development, health and wellness, and extracurricular activities.

The Kent Awards ceremony will be held on **Monday, May 21st at 6pm at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Foster City, California** (social hour and musical performance to begin at 6pm with dinner and the awards ceremony to follow at 7pm). The 2012 Kent Awards are being sponsored by Chevron Energy Systems. At the ceremony, the 20 award winners will be honored, including:

- Belmont-Redwood Shores School District: Central Elementary – Institution Constitution
- Cabrillo Unified School District: El Granada Elementary – The Dolphin Club
- Hillsborough School District: West Hillsborough Elementary – Operation Risk
- Jefferson Elementary School District: District Wide – Family Literacy and Health Day
- Jefferson Elementary School District: Susan B. Anthony Elementary – 3rd Grade Wilderness School
- Jefferson Union High School District: Terra Nova High School – Social Communication
- Jefferson Union High School District: District Wide – Life Skills Program
- Menlo Park School District: Encinal Elementary – Bayside Explorers
- Menlo Park School District: Encinal/Laurel Elementary – Living the Diversity
- Pacifica School District: Vallemar School – Mouse Squad
- Redwood City School District: Clifford Elementary – FOSS Science Leadership Team
- Redwood City School District: North Star Elementary – Festival of Words

- Redwood City School District: Roosevelt Elementary – Project Based Learning
- San Bruno Park Elementary School District: Allen Elementary – Fractions: Academic Music
- San Carlos School District: District Wide – Rite of Passage Experiences (ROPES)
- Sequoia Union High School District: Sequoia High School – SAFE Program
- Sequoia Union High School District: Carlmont High School – S.O.S. Program
- San Mateo Foster City School District: Brewer Island Elementary – Life Skills Program
- San Mateo Foster City School District: Audubon Elementary – Audubon Technology Program
- South San Francisco Unified School District: Los Cerritos Elementary – School Wide Reform Initiative

Included in the award recipients is the winner of the third annual Emily Garfield Preventive Counseling Award. The Emily Garfield Award was established through a grant from Youth Empowering Systems to honor local education pioneer Emily Garfield to focus on successful alcohol and drug prevention programs as well as positive youth development and community wellness programs. The winner of the 2012 Emily Garfield Preventive Counseling Award is Diahanna Flores, Brentwood Academy, Ravenswood School District.

“We continue to be impressed by the outstanding innovative programs provided by our schools particularly in these difficult economic times,” said Seth Rosenblatt, President of the San Mateo County School Boards Association and Governing Board Member of the San Carlos School District. "We are excited to celebrate them."

More information about the Kent Awards presentation and banquet and the SMCSBA can be found at <http://www.smcsba.org>.

About the San Mateo County School Boards Association

The San Mateo County School Boards Association represents the 22 school districts, the Community College District and County Office of Education in San Mateo County, California. SMCSBA supports the governance team -- school board trustees, superintendents and senior administrative staff --through education on critical public education issues and networking opportunities for its members. SMCSBA is a chapter of the California School Boards Association which is involved in developing, communicating and advocating the perspective of California school districts and county offices of education.

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SAN MATEO COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

J. RUSSELL KENT EXEMPLARY PROGRAM AWARD

Summary of 2012 Award Recipients

Belmont Redwood Shores School District

Central Elementary School

Institution Constitution

Institution Constitution is an engaging, hands-on program that helps students foster an understanding and interest in American government. This civics platform was designed to introduce fifth grade students to the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government by having them participate in a simulated election. Every year, students run for an actual government position, which has been researched and modified to fit the needs of our classroom community. The election process includes casting nominations, participating in a debate, speech making, and voting. Once elected to office, students enthusiastically carry out their assigned duties, promoting independence, responsibility, and patriotic spirit.

Cabrillo Unified School District

El Granada Elementary School

The Dolphin Club

The Dolphin Club, at El Granada Elementary School, teaches students the importance of learning and extending their core curricular goals through an innovative afterschool program that nurtures the student's unique talents. The Dolphin Club creates a safe, welcoming program that fosters strong positive relationships with peers and staff. Students participate in activities that help develop and reinforce positive self-esteem and lifetime skills that will support their development for many years to come. Each day, students rotate through a schedule that includes healthy snacks, physical recreational activity, academic support and tutoring, and an integrated arts approach to enrichment activities.

Hillsborough School District

West Hillsborough Elementary School

Operation Risk

Operation Risk inspires teachers to take risks within their practices and to instill the value of risk-taking to their students. Teachers are institutionalizing risk-taking as best practice by trying new methodologies and/or strategies for student engagement. Operation Risk offers permission for a non-linear, non-conforming and fearless movement for instruction. Teachers move out of their comfort zones and explore ways to improve student engagement through their instruction. Conceptualizing Operation Risk is to make clear there must be an evolution of students' thoughts and ideas endemic to the teachers' instruction.

Jefferson Elementary School District

District Wide

Family Literacy and Health Day

The Jefferson Elementary School District, Daly City Partnership, and PTA joined forces in 2002 to gather families together for a city-wide literacy event. Since then, it has included a health component, addressing the need of combating childhood obesity and also as a one-stop referral to health services in our community. The event, "Family Literacy and Health Day," serves to expand family knowledge of literacy activities, linking parents to school curricula. Thus, true partnership and collaboration with all participants is formed, creating a sense of one community working together to enhance quality of life and ensuring school success.

Jefferson Elementary School District
Susan B. Anthony Elementary School
3rd Grade Wilderness School

The Third Grade Camping Trip with the Wilderness School is collaboration between the JUHSD Wilderness School students and Susan B. Anthony Third Grade students. Through the camping trip, high school students build their leadership skill and third grade students have an authentic opportunity to build community, learn life skills and deepen their understanding of the community they live in by exploring San Bruno Mountain. Students hike up the mountain, explore flora and fauna, cook, do chores and stay overnight. The camping trip is part of the Community Environmental Education Program offered at the Wilderness School and introduced to third grade.

Jefferson Union High School District
Terra Nova High School
Social Communication

The Terra Nova Special Education Department identified numerous students with a need for a specialized social-emotional communication class. These students were found to have problems from not understanding social communication hierarchy that most learn through observation. Speech therapy often missed the peer-to-peer cooperative learning model to better teach society's social norms and how to properly act when face to face with these situations. Students who cannot understand perspective taking and expected/unexpected behavior often feel confused, angry, depressed and lack healthy relationships. Social-Emotional instruction has proven to help student's better deal with the rigorous social demands of society.

Jefferson Union High School District
District Wide
Life Skills Program

The JUHSD Life Skills Prom was designed by Staff and the Associated Student Body (ASB) classes for students with moderate to severe disabilities. These students experience a prom like atmosphere with general education and special education peers that they socialize with on a daily basis. While these students may attend the school prom, this prom is open to all special education high school students, adult transition students and graduates of JUHSD. The prom offers an opportunity for special education students to be active in their community as well as the community to be involved with the special education students.

Menlo Park School District
Encinal Elementary School
Bayside Explorers

The Bayside Explorers Program is an Extended School Year (ESY) program that supports the development of academic, communication, and social-emotional learning through fun, high-interest project based learning experiences. Thematic activities, events, and academic assignments focus on concepts related to exploring the San Francisco Bay area. A project-based learning approach provides teachers the ability to build concepts through concrete, experiential learning activities and provides opportunities for students with disabilities to increase their social skills by participating in carefully designed, multi-ability and multi-age project groups.

Menlo Park School District
Encinal and Laurel Elementary Schools
Living the Diversity

The Menlo Park School District's *Living the Diversity in Spanish Culture* program is designed to help build collaboration and community between the English Only programs and the Spanish Immersion programs. This program extends the Spanish cultural experiences beyond those students in the Immersion classrooms to those in the English only classrooms. The program teaches all students involved that the Spanish culture spans Europe, North, Central and South America as well as the Caribbean. The K-2 students, involved in the program, are given the opportunity to interact with each other as they participate in activities that provide real world experiences.

Pacifica School District
Vallemar School
Mouse Squad

Vallemar's Mouse Squad is an after school program that provides a group of 4th – 8th grade students an opportunity to learn IT support skills, customer service, communication and leadership skills. Mouse Squad is aligned with the Pacifica School District's focus and vision for students, which promotes 21st Century Education. At the same time, students are providing a service to our school. After a hands-on training in the computer lab, the students can be seen around school repairing computers and printers and helping with maintenance of our technical equipment. These students are gaining valuable lifelong skills.

Redwood City School District
Clifford Elementary School
FOSS Science Leadership Team

Clifford was selected by the Lawrence Hall of Science to participate in a three-year grant that allows four lead teachers, the school principal, and a district representative to attend intensive trainings on how to maximize student learning using the Full Option Science System (FOSS) kits, a hands-on science curriculum. FOSS leadership team members are trained to encourage students to question naturally occurring phenomena around them. The team developed leadership knowledge and skills that provided a toolbox for them to support all teachers at Clifford with the in-depth implementation and integration of FOSS science and literacy.

Redwood City School District
North Star Academy Elementary School
Festival of Words

Festival of Words is a day-long celebration of the power of language and creative expression. Students were invited to participate in 3 workshops with 25-30 students per workshop that explore how spoken, written, visual and musical languages are used to express ideas and document experiences and knowledge, as well as how they are used playfully in everyday life. Over sixty-six workshops were available to choose from, many led by outside community members. Festival of Words shows students that strong language skills lead to meaningful work, creative achievement and enriching contributions to our shared cultural life.

Redwood City School District
Roosevelt Elementary School
Project Based Learning

Project Based Learning (PBL) is an educational approach that organizes lessons and assessments around carefully crafted questions or projects. The students in a PBL environment become active solution seekers to problems, develop both oral and written presentation skills, and learn to collaborate with their peers to solve problems. During carefully crafted units of study, the students are motivated and highly engaged and at the end of the unit show stronger retention of the content. At Roosevelt School students in Kindergarten through sixth grade participate in Project Base Learning science and social studies units throughout the school year.

San Bruno Park School District
Allen Elementary School
Fractions: Academic Music

The Academic Music program at Allen School is an innovative math intervention that uses weekly music instruction to teach fraction concepts and problem solving K-4. Students begin to understand note value as early as kindergarten. The lessons provide students with authentic music instruction, creating natural musical rhythms of four beats per measure. Students step, clap and/or drum the notes' values and play the music on recorders. Using fraction bars, the number line, and notes, students "break up" the larger notes into the smallest quantity, thus adding and subtracting fractions with unlike denominators.

San Carlos School District
District Wide
Rite of Passage Experiences (ROPES)

The Rite of Passage Experiences (ROPES) program, supported by many groups and organizations in San Carlos, is designed as an optional enrichment activity as students complete a cycle of their education. The ROPES projects give students in fourth, sixth and eighth grade opportunities to explore and demonstrate project based learning and to participate in an academic ritual by way of real-life learning experiences. These challenges encourage students to use their school learning to suggest solutions, research information, and create products that reflect real life situations.

Sequoia Union High School District
Sequoia High School
SAFE Program

Starting out slowly, the SAFE program has grown from a sparsely attended program in 2008/09 to one that some days has over 160 students participating in a variety of activities. It provides a safe and welcoming atmosphere that encourages students to do their homework, get assistance when needed, as also pursue the numerous enrichment activities provided. Students are becoming a part of the vital after school community and as a result are more positively connected to other students and staff.

Sequoia Union High School District
Carlmont High School
S.O.S. Program

The goal of S.O.S. is to designate and train student leaders to bring awareness to their peers about pertinent adolescent issues and life challenges. This is done through presentations that include personal stories, current psycho/educational material, role-play and interactive activities.

San Mateo Foster City School District
Brewer Island Elementary School
Life Skills Program

Brewer Island School's Lifeskills Program was developed to promote a positive school learning environment and help students develop lifeskills to support their achievement and success as positive community members, in school and throughout their lives. Components include: BILL, the Brewer Island Lifeskills Leader mascot, literature aligned with the monthly focus Lifeskills, student leadership opportunities including Team BILL Student Helpers during recesses, Student Council, an annual school-wide Community Service Project, assemblies, and Lifeskills Spirit Days. The program is kept visible through the use of 'Billboards', Lifeskills labeled school areas, and Newsletters that promote and support the use of the Lifeskills.

San Mateo Foster City School District
Audubon Elementary School
Audubon Technology Program

Audubon's technology program is based on a teacher driven philosophy of teacher participation, training and accountability at each grade level. The program targets technology curriculum integration, reinforcing classroom curriculum and student acquisition of 21st century technology skills. The program provides every student with the same level of tech experience at each grade level, building on a student's knowledge from year to year. Skill expectations include: technology use, word processing, and mastery of communication tools.

South San Francisco Unified School District
Los Cerritos Elementary School
School Wide Reform Initiative

As a commitment to the educational success of all Los Cerritos Students and in an effort to close the achievement gap, the school implemented school wide reform on systematic signature practices through a coherent vision of explicitly shared instructional practices, teacher collaboration, and a shared belief that all students can learn.

Emily Garfield Preventive Counseling Award

Diahanna Flores
School Counselor, Brentwood Academy
Ravenswood School District

Ms. Flores has served in a counseling and parent support role at Brentwood Academy for the last nine years. Her dedication to the students and families of Brentwood has positively impacted the community, and her focus on both academic and social well-being for every child is a model for the staff. She runs positive behavior intervention and support teams, and has an unwavering commitment to kids who are at risk.
