

Two named Contra Costa County Teacher of the Year



Courtesy Contra Costa Office of Education

Two teachers, **Shawna Hawes** of Valley View Middle School of Pleasant Hill, and **Gina Minder-Maldonado** of Oakley Elementary School, were named teacher of the year during a dinner in Concord on Sept. 22, 2016.



Are you community-minded?

Passionate about community college education?

If so, the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District needs your help!

Consider serving on our Measure A/B Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee!

The committee provides oversight to ensure that bond revenues are expended only for the purposes authorized by law.

The application can be found at: <http://www.clpccd.org/bond/documents/COApplication.pdf>

Applications are due Friday, January 27, 2017 at 5 p.m.

Email questions to: dhorne@clpccd.org



CONCORD — A long-time Oakley elementary schoolteacher and a Pleasant Hill middle school computer science teacher were honored this week as the county's best educators.

Gina Minder-Maldonado, a second-grade teacher at Oakley Elementary School, and Shauna Hawes, a teacher in the Mt. Diablo Unified School District, were named Contra Costa County Teacher of the Year on Thursday.

"All of it has been humbling," Minder-Maldonado said, noting that she didn't prepare an acceptance speech because she thought the honor would go to others in the running.

School districts tapped 21 teachers for the award — seven of them from East County — of whom 19 were eligible to progress to the countywide competition. A three-step selection process that winnowed the group to four finalists had panels of judges visit applicants' classrooms to watch them in action, interview them and listen to each give a speech on what they have learned from their students.

The awards dinner in Concord drew hundreds, including representatives from businesses, county agencies, K-12 schools, colleges and universities.

Hawes teaches computer applications/technology to grades 6-8 at Valley View Middle School in Pleasant Hill. She has spent her 18-year career with the Mt. Diablo District; she also has taught English, history and reading to sixth-graders as well as all subjects to fifth-graders.

"I have worked closely with Shauna Hawes for the past several years," says Foothill Middle School teacher Margaret Elliott. "Shauna does not work for awards or accolades, but simply to inspire and impact all those she comes in contact with each day. She believes that all students should have the same opportunities that her students have. Shauna is what you could call 'open-source.' "



Sign up for our newsletters!

SUBSCRIBE

Follow Us



MOST POPULAR >

- 1 Update: Tower of Power leader says band members hit by train, recovering
- 2 Fire badly damages sushi restaurant in Alameda
- 3 Bay Area flooding: Multiple Delta levee breaches reported
- 4 Oakland: 5-year-old was living in closet at building raided by deputies
- 5 One dead, one wounded in East Oakland shooting

Minder-Maldonado has 25 years' experience under her belt, and for the past 18 of those the Bay Point resident has worked at Oakley Elementary School.

Medical Assistant School

Hands-On Medical Assistant Training In The Bay Area. Start Today!

unitekmedicalassisting.com

In addition to second graders, she has taught preschoolers through fifth-graders as well as adult education classes.

New to the school, Principal Kaylene Merrill only has known Minder-Maldonado a couple of months but says she noticed a difference right away.

“There is such a connection with her students — they listen to her,” she said. “She has a calm tone

in her voice.”

Such is Minder-Maldonado's ability to maintain control of her classroom — 12 of her 18 students are boys — that one would never know some of them are challenging to teach, Merrill said.

Minder-Maldonado thinks her knack for getting students to do their best boils down to making them feel valued.

She makes a point of chatting with each of them regularly — not to discuss academics but simply to find out how they're doing.

Children who feel an adult is listening to and rooting for them, who still accepts them when they make mistakes, are motivated to achieve, she said.

“When you make a connection they'll want to work for you,” Minder-Maldonado said. “It's like they ... want you to be proud of them.”

The women now move on to the statewide Teacher of the Year competition, the winners of which are expected to be announced early next month.

6 Affordable apartments being built in East Oakland

7 SoulCycle gym customer in Marin dies of meningitis

8 Man shot outside Oakland High School; student arrested



More videos:

