



Presenting MBUSD's 2018 Classified Employees of the Year

Every spring, employees in each site in the Manhattan Beach Unified School District nominate classified employees for Employee of the Year. Classified employees are all of our non-certificated employees and can include everyone from security personnel, to maintenance, office staff, paraeducators, accountants, health care professionals, you name it - they are the backbone of our District! We are proud to announce this year's Classified Employees of the Year in MBUSD.



Carol Gerken, District Office

Carol is known to be an exceptional team player who is focused on how to help all of us be successful. She never hesitates to step up to a task that needs to be done and the words, "Not my job" aren't in her vocabulary! She handles a never-ending stream of projects from workers compensation to property leases to insurance claims to bond oversight meetings and a million other things with patience, grace, and creativity.



Iltze Guerra, Manhattan Beach Preschool

Iltze is an Instructional Assistant at MBP. She has been a valuable team player to us the past 6 years working in a variety of roles at the preschool from changing diapers in the morning for our 2 year old class then transitioning to our 5 year old class to help work with special education students. No matter what classroom or students she is working with, Iltze always has a smile on her face and a gentle demeanor when working with the students.



Paula Sodeika, Grand View Elementary

The grace, calm and intelligence with which Paula handles EVERY situation is remarkable. She is the consummate professional, team player and perfect health assistant for any child in our district. She handles a tremendously busy health room for over 700 students (singlehandedly!) and with expert thinking and emergency response. Paula has even been known to follow-up with students and parents well after the work day is over. Parents know their kids are in good hands.



Chris Primm, Meadows Elementary

Saying that Chris Primm is passionate about reading is an understatement. Not only does she KNOW her library inside and out, she goes above and beyond to bring reading fun and reading engagement to Meadows. This year she organized a book drive for Access Books and organized volunteers to help label the books at a Compton elementary school. She also manages the Meadows Library Facebook page. Chris is a true literary treasure at Meadows and she makes sure that we "read all about it!"



Lupe Lara, Pacific Elementary

Lupe is such a ray of sunshine to the special education program at Pacific! She uses her vast knowledge of behavioral skills and applies them so naturally with any student she works with. Her approach is so warm and comforting to all the students and staff. She takes on any assignment/project given willingly, and collaborates with other staff gently and effectively. Lupe works with our most impacted students – she will do anything and everything to make our special needs students part of our inclusive school community.



Gale Davis, Pennekamp

Gale Davis is Pennekamp's Health Assistant. She worked one year at Grand View before coming to her home at Pennekamp Elementary where she has worked since 2003. Gale works tirelessly in taking care of the students. She is amazing at making all their hurts go away. When asked what makes Ms. Davis so special, students remarked about the tooth necklaces she creates so lost teeth make it home. Another noted that she is a very caring, devoted, sympathetic, compassionate nurse. This student said it all: "She is like a mom to us."



Elmer Monge, Robinson

Elmer is not only a talented Systems Technician and exemplary employee, but an incredible person as well. Elmer responds to every request in record time and he does so cheerfully and accurately. Teachers are convinced he has super powers because when they email him about a tech problem, he appears just minutes later. Elmer works closely with the PTSA and has been instrumental in getting technology into the hands of our students to use for learning. Whatever is needed, Elmer completes the job often before expected and always with a smile.



Loren Sorensen, Manhattan Beach Middle School

Loren is the heartbeat of Manhattan Beach Middle School. Loren built a team in the MBMS office where there used to be individuals. She sees the strengths of each member of her team and builds around those strengths so those around her feel successful and the team is strengthened as a whole. The systems and relationships she builds makes MBMS better and more efficient and she does it with friendliness, strong relationships, and passion. Her work makes all of us shine, and MBMS is better every day she is in the office.



Mabel Huizar, Mira Costa High School

Mabel works at the hub of Mira Costa, also known as the copy/workroom. Assisting a staff of over 100 teachers, she makes sure that every print job on campus is done on time, accurately, and in confidence. Whether it's preparing for final exams, or getting everyone prepped for the first day of school, Mabel can be found with a smile on her face and always a determined, "can do" attitude. No job is ever too big or too small for her and the students are also grateful. Printer at home jam just as you're printing the last page of that research paper? No problem, Mabel's got you covered!



John D. Maher, Maintenance & Operations

John is the go-to guy when we get in a bind. He will drop what he is doing to help out no matter the situation. John has also been the acting electrician filling in during our temporary vacancy. He has been handling the clocks, lights, power outlets, time clocks and more during this time. He also has a great sense of humor and is quite entertaining. He is awesome working on his own or with a team. Whenever asked to do a certain task his standard answer is always "OK." John always has a great attitude at work and doesn't get phased by things that come up. He's friendly, skilled, enthusiastic, and flexible!



Hilda Wolfe, Food & Nutrition Services

Hilda began her career at MBUSD in 1990 and has spent her 28 years watching the students of MBMS grow into successful adults and members of the community, which she also calls home. She loves her job and there is seldom a day that Hilda is not smiling or happy to come to work. She is the one that always says "yes" if extra help is needed and does the task without complaining. She takes pride in her work, and her motto is either do it right or don't do it at all!

We have amazing classified employees in Manhattan Beach USD supporting students and families. Congratulations to these employees for their special recognition and a hearty thank you to all our employees for everything they do.

Mike Matthews
MBUSD Superintendent

Follow Us!

