



Calaveras County Office of Education

## PRESS RELEASE

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Calaverasmentoring.org

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### **Tim Smith named March 2019 Mentor of the Month**

Calaveras County – The Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program is honored to name Murphys resident Tim Smith as the March Mentor of the Month. “Tim is husband to Kathryn Eustis, founding director of the Mentoring Program. In many ways, Tim helped make the program what it is today,” said Katie Lackler, coordinator of the Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program. “We are lucky to have Tim join the ranks of mentors. There are few people who know this program and its true importance as well as Tim Smith.”

Tim has considered mentoring since the Mentoring Program’s inception in 2003. He was matched with 10-year-old Gavin just over a year ago. “It just seemed like the right time and the right kid. I was waiting until my kids were a little older and I could give it the time it deserves,” said Tim. The Mentoring Program encourages prospective mentors to seriously consider the commitment required to become a mentor before signing up.

Tim has always had a strong connection to the Mentoring Program. He acted in the Follies and supported every fundraiser since the program began. He is also the creator of the Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program logo. In other areas of his life, Tim works as a ceramics instructor with Vallecito Unified School District and participates in Studio 4 Dance Theater’s production of *The Nutcracker* each year.

Tim met his mentee, Gavin, several years ago at *Nutcracker* rehearsals, where they would sit together and chat as their family members rehearsed. “They had a relationship coming in, so it’s always been all about love for Mr. Tim,” said Debbie Strand, Gavin’s mom. Mr. Tim is the name Gavin has used for Tim since they met.

“He has someone he knows he can 100% rely on and trust and have as a confidant,” said Debbie. “Every time he comes back from hanging out with Mr. Tim, he’s positive and in a good mood. Mr. Tim is the perfect fit for my son because he allows Gavin the space to be who he is.”

“Gavin is a great kid. He’s a character. He cracks me up all the time!” said Tim. “He is so smart and funny and full of life.”

This year, Tim and Gavin built a rocket from scratch over several weeks. “When we built the rocket it took a while but when it was ready it was amazing,” said Gavin. “We built something that actually works.” Tim and Gavin also love participating in the Mentoring Program field trips like the annual bowling trip to Black Oak Lanes. Many weeks, the duo enjoy a simple game of chess and a meal.

They also take advantage of the Mentor Rewards Program at Murphys' businesses like JoMa's Artisan Ice Cream and Firewood Café. Mentor Rewards Partners are local businesses that offer a discount or other promotion to mentors and mentees during their outings together. Mentor Rewards Program partners often showcase their participation with a sticker in their window.

Gavin feels he has changed over the past year. He said, "I've gained a lot of self-control and more courage. I am a lot more secure in myself. Before I wanted to be alone a lot -- hide away -- but after a while with Mr. Tim and the Mentoring Program I felt more open."

"Mentoring is the most invaluable experience we could ever have," said Debbie. "I think the program offers an amazing amount of support and quality training for the mentors. There are lots of opportunities for the mentees and mentors to gather and see there's a broader connection than just the one-on-one matches."

"As a mentor, I am part of a greater group of people than just Gavin and me. We have become part of the weave of the community. He is a part of my family and I am a part of his," said Tim. "Now we are both part of the Mentoring Program family which branches out into the community in so many ways."

"I honestly feel like he's the best mentor anyone can ask for," said Gavin about Mr. Tim.

The Mentoring Program is always seeking volunteers and particularly needs mentors for boys in Valley Springs and Copperopolis. "There are a number of ways to support the program," said Katie Lackler, "such as suggesting a possible mentor, becoming a Mentor Rewards Partner, helping with fundraising, and getting the word out to the community."

For more information about the Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program, call Katie Lackler, Coordinator of the Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program at 736-6078 or visit online at [calaverasmentoring.org](http://calaverasmentoring.org).