



El Monte Union High School District

Community Committed to College and Career

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dec. 13, 2019

CONTACT: Juliette Funes, William Diepenbrock

PHONE: (909) 445-1001

South El Monte High Teacher Honored with Esperanza Award at Tamalada Fundraiser

EL MONTE – Tam Ly Wong, a 25-year teacher at South El Monte High School who has helped shape the future of El Monte Union’s career pathways and those of her students, was honored with the Bobby Salcedo Esperanza Award during the 16th annual Tamalada fundraiser on Dec. 12.

The award – named for Roberto “Bobby” Salcedo, a respected El Monte Union educator who died in 2009 – is given to outstanding educators who exemplify Salcedo’s tireless commitment to education.

“My purpose is to help students find direction in life and when I see that light turn on, it feels really good. It’s what I work for and why I stay,” Wong said. “I worked with Bobby when I was at South, and it is an honor to know that I received an award that exemplifies his mission for our students.”

Wong emigrated from Vietnam in 1979 and grew up in El Monte, attending its schools and overcoming barriers as an English learner. She is the oldest in her family and is a first-generation college student.

“Even though we come from different cultures and ethnicities, I can understand our students and what their experiences are,” she said. “I can identify with the parents, try to explain the benefits of our programs and encourage them to foster their children’s growth.”

Wong has helped shape El Monte Union’s career technical education business and finance pathway to ensure students can explore career choices at all grade levels. She also mentors students in the Future Business Leaders of America club, in which she was a member as a senior in high school. She has been the club’s adviser since 1994.

“In FBLA, we become a family and help each other out when needed. I have seen a lot of students blossom over the years,” Wong said. “I am grateful to have the opportunity to help them find their wings and know there’s a place for them.”

Colleagues describe Wong as an educator who exemplifies passion, inspiration and empathy, constantly going above and beyond for students.

“I had the honor of working side by side with Ms. Wong at South, and each day I witnessed her enthusiasm in the classroom, the compassion in her actions and the extensive support she gave to our students as they

– MORE –

were pursuing their postsecondary options,” Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. “She is someone I have always looked up to. She is a shining example of what an educator should be.”

The Tamalada, which raises funds to support the El Monte Promise Foundation’s college savings account program, is hosted by the Foundation and partnering entities dedicated to working with parents, school districts and community groups to cultivate a college-going culture in El Monte.

PHOTO CAPTION:

121619_EMUHSWONG: South El Monte High School business teacher Tam Ly Wong was honored with the Bobby Salcedo Esperanza Award for her dedication and commitment to students during the 16th annual Tamalada fundraiser event on Dec. 12.

###

The vision of the El Monte Union High School District is to empower and motivate our students to be resilient, college and career ready, lifelong learners and contributing members of our global society.