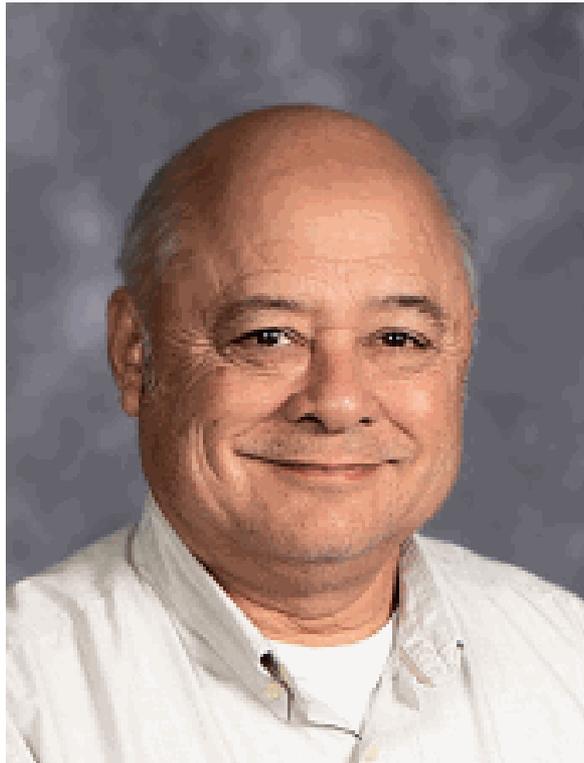


**EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR**  
**2014-2015**  
**JEFFERSON SCHOOL DISTRICT**

# STEVE DRESSER – DISTRICT OFFICE



Steve Dresser has been with the district since 2012 as the IT coordinator. Each and every staff member and student relies on the outstanding service Steve provides as the district information technology coordinator.

Steve plays a very important role in our district, supporting and maintaining all of the computers, printers, servers, and user accounts in the district. Technology has become ubiquitous like a light switch; we expect it to be there and work when we turn it on. The key to great technology service is to be proactive versus reactive. Steve does an excellent job working with our County Office to predict future problems and take the necessary steps to be proactive.

Steve is one of those employees that goes above and beyond the call of duty. Over the winter break this year we were expecting delivery of 660 new Chromebooks. All throughout the break, Steve checked the tracking of the devices to see if they came in. As soon as the devices arrived he got right to work to get them out into students' hands as soon as possible.

Steve has contributed greatly to the overall positive environment of our schools.



# BEN COOPER – TRAINA SCHOOL

Ben Cooper started working for Jefferson School District in 2006 as a music teacher. Ben epitomizes everything that makes a wonderful teacher, especially a music teacher. Ben is always searching for creative ways to engage his students in the curriculum or enhance the music program at Traina. He spends countless hours at work to plan ahead, work with students, or do whatever he can to help out.

Ben is always looking for creative ways to excite students' love for the arts, especially music. His dedication is proven in the performances his band has each winter and spring. Mr. Cooper inspires greatness and creativity in his students. Several of his students have found their niche at school because of the atmosphere of learning he provides.

He has played an integral part in just about every after school activity at Traina. Ben assists others without the desire to be recognized, he simply does it because it is what's right.



# LAURINA ROCHA – TRAINA SCHOOL



Laurina Rocha started working for the Jefferson School District in 1997 as a food service clerk. She has worked to build positive relationships with staff and students.

Laurina's compassion and persistence is evident in the welcoming environment she has created first thing in the morning in the multipurpose room. Her efforts and hard work impact many students at Traina School. She puts a special emphasis on sack lunches for students on fieldtrips. The students adore Mrs. Rochas's kindness and thoughtful actions to acknowledge students.

Laurina is the soft spoken leader in the kitchen at Anthony Traina Elementary School. It is her kind actions that make every meal received feel like a home cooked meal.



# CASSANDRA DE WOOD – HAWKINS SCHOOL

Ms.deWood is a seventh grade science teacher. She also teaches beginning and advanced drama classes and a technology elective. Ms. deWood is a key employee on campus whose contributions go way beyond the classroom.

In the words of her co-workers, “Cassandra is a tremendously hard worker whose dedication always goes above and beyond the call of duty”. Cassandra is a school, district, county, and state leader in science education. Each year, her students continue to excel at the county and state level of science fair. This year, three of the seven county science fair finalists hailed from Ms. deWood’s class. Her performance has far exceeded any science teacher in the region and she has been awarded the California State Science Fair Teacher of the Year award.

Cassandra’s impact goes beyond science. She continuously has a positive, student centered effect on campus culture. In addition to all of this, Cassandra creates the yearbook for Tom Hawkins in her spare time. This is not her adjunct duty. She takes on this responsibility because, in her words, “it’s for the kids.”



# BARBARA LEVAL – HAWKINS SCHOOL



Barbara Leval is a food service worker at Tom Hawkins. What Barbara does for the students on her campus is incredible. She not only provides nourishment to students' bodies, but to their hearts as well. She makes personal connections with students, striving to provide nutritious and delicious food options that kids will love. Barb goes above and beyond to have a positive impact on Hawkins students.

When you go into the kitchen at Tom Hawkins, you will always see Barbara's smiling face. She greets the children with a warm smile and a kind word. She is organized and composed in what can be a daunting and chaotic process of getting TK-8<sup>th</sup> graders served with breakfast, snack, and lunch each and every day. Barbara takes the time to get to know students as individuals and builds relationships with them.

Barbara has taken the time to adapt students' favorite recipes to meet the rigorous nutritional demands of our wellness policy, and still be delicious. She knows that if the students like menu items they are more likely to try new things and start the lifelong habit of healthy eating.



# SARAH COOK – MONTICELLO SCHOOL

Sarah Cook has been a teacher for over 20 years. She has taught Kindergarten through fifth grades. At Monticello, Mrs. Cook has taught Kindergarten and third grade.

Mrs. Cook is very creative. This school year, she implemented “Cooking with Mrs. Cook” with her Kindergarten students every Friday, which the students look forward to.

Mrs. Cook teaches a balanced curriculum within her classroom setting. Mrs. Cook is patient and kind with the students that she teaches. She is positive and a team player.

In the words of her colleagues, “Sarah always finds interesting ways to teach certain concepts to students which could sometimes be difficult. Mrs. Cook incorporates music while teaching concepts. Students seem to grasp certain concepts easier through song.”



# TONI LAGOS – MONTICELLO SCHOOL



Mrs. Lagos has been an employee in the Jefferson School District at Monticello for eleven years. She is a paraprofessional in our Special Day Class at Monticello School. Mrs. Lagos said she loves what she does at Monticello.

One staff member said, “Toni is a team player who cares about all students.”

Mrs. Lagos came to the United States from the Philippines in 1988. While living in the Philippines, she received a Bachelor’s degree in Biology from the University of Santo Tomas.



# AMANDA GIESEKE – JEFFERSON SCHOOL

Amanda Gieseke has been an employee of the Jefferson School District only two and one-half years, but she has accomplished a great deal in that time frame. Her schedule is hectic and full of activity. Amanda directs Jefferson's band, color guard, drama, the yearbook, handles the sound system for events, and so much more with a strong skill set.

To her “the most inspiring moment of all is when something clicks with the students and they master a concept we have been working on.” She has fresh ideas that are exciting for everyone to be part of, staff and students alike.

In addition to being part of the Jefferson staff, Amanda leads the color guard at Tracy High School.



# MICHELE VINYARD – JEFFERSON SCHOOL



Michele Vinyard has been an employee of the Jefferson School District since 2001 and the clerk at Jefferson School since 2005. Michele's job impacts the entire school and she performs her job to the fullest each day. No task is too big or too small. She realizes that every task she performs plays a part in helping the school run successfully. She works with students, staff, and parents daily.

She has a lot of pride for her school. Michele says that she really enjoys being a part of making a difference in a child's life. Michele has established many lifelong friendships and she loves working with a group of people she considers her second family. Michele truly cares and it shows.

