



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lodi USD Employee Named County Teacher of the Year

Lodi, CA (June 11, 2019)—One of Lodi USD’s very own was named San Joaquin County Teacher of the Year for 2019. Jeff Simpfenderfer, a Liberty High teacher, first received Lodi USD’s Teacher of the Year award this spring. Placed in the running for the countywide competition, Simpfenderfer was named County Teacher of the Year during the Ninth Annual San Joaquin County Classified Employee and Teacher of the Year Awards Celebration Dinner held on Thursday, June 6.

As the named County Teacher of the Year, Simpfenderfer received \$1,000 from Premier Community Credit Union and a nomination for the State for California Teacher of the Year.

“We greatly appreciate Mr. Simpfenderfer and believe that he is well deserving of this honor. His work with students is exceptional and we are proud to have him in the Lodi USD family,” said Superintendent Cathy Nichols-Washer.

Simpfenderfer was originally nominated by Liberty High’s Principal, Tamara Dillon. His nomination was supported by recommendation letters from Tiffany Wood, a counselor at Liberty High, and Cynthia Close, Co-Chair of the English Department at Liberty High.

Referred to as “Mr. S” by his students, Dillon shared, “you would be hard-pressed to find an educator [who] cares more about students and their learning than [Simpfenderfer does]. [He] is honed in to his students’ needs, both academic and emotionally. He finds relatable literature to show them they are not alone and that books can help them understand their world.”

A graduate of University of California, Berkeley, Simpfenderfer taught for 11 years at Sierra Christian High School in Rocklin, CA. Simpfenderfer went on to attend the University of Phoenix to obtain his teaching credential. Once in Lodi USD, Simpfenderfer taught at Delta Sierra Middle for one year and four years at Lodi Adult School. Simpfenderfer now teaches English, horticulture, and family living at Liberty High.

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In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Simpfenderfer serves as the technology lead for Liberty High and a mentor for a teacher at Lodi Adult School.

“It made sense for me to be the one to help [the teacher]. I enjoy being able to give suggestions, to reassure, and then see [the teacher] really excel in [the] classroom,” said Simpfenderfer.

Dillon isn’t surprised by Simpfenderfer’s willingness to help others.

“[He] is not only an incredible teacher, he is an all-around incredible being. For many students, he’s the teacher of a lifetime,” said Dillon.

Wood, a school counselor and colleague of Simpfenderfer’s, echoed Dillon’s sentiments.

“He is the most beloved teacher amongst our students... He makes his students feel safe, supported, and loved. He has a wonderful passion for teaching and goes above and beyond for his students’ successes,” said Wood.

Next up for Simpfenderfer is the planning and preparation for the California Teacher of the Year Ceremony, which will take place later this summer.

“I’m excited and proud to represent both Liberty High and Lodi USD at the State level. I look forward to it,” said Simpfenderfer.

About Lodi Unified School District

Lodi Unified School District is located in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. Home to 50 school sites, Lodi USD provides high-quality education to a diverse population of 29,000 students. Lodi USD encompasses more than 350 square miles, including the Cities of Lodi and Stockton as well as the rural communities of Acampo, Clements, Lockeford, Victor, and Woodbridge.

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