



# Monterey County Office of Education

*Leadership, Support, and Service to Prepare All Students for Success*

*Dr. Deneen Guss  
County Superintendent of Schools*

News Advisory - For Immediate Release  
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## **Monterey County School Boards Association Honors Girls' Health in Girls' Hands with "Excellence in Education" Award**

**SALINAS, CA** – The Monterey County School Boards Association (MCSBA) is proud to announce that **Girls' Health in Girls' Hands (GHGH)** will be honored with the **2025 Excellence in Education Award** at its Annual Dinner and Organizational Meeting beginning at 5:30 p.m. on **Thursday, May 1, 2025, at Hartnell Community College in Salinas.**

Selected from a competitive list of 40 nominees submitted by school districts across Monterey County, GHGH was chosen for its transformative impact on students' lives and its commitment to empowering youth through leadership development, health education, and advocacy.

GHGH addresses health education disparities among girls, ages 8-18, in Monterey County with a strong focus in South County. The program focuses on providing education and mentorship around social, emotional, and physical wellness. GHGH empowers girls to advocate for their health needs, providing safe spaces to explore important and sensitive topics. A highlight of the program is the Girls' Leadership Network, a girl-led advocacy and leadership group that uplifts youth voices and drives countywide initiatives they care about. Additionally, the organization's signature Annual Summit, designed by and for girls, creates a safe, powerful space for exploring topics such as self-care, physical wellness, and identity, while nurturing confidence and community connection.

"Girls' Health in Girls' Hands is a powerful example of what happens when a community invests in young women and gives them the tools, confidence, and platform to lead. Their work has inspired thousands of girls across Monterey County, and we are proud to honor them with the 2025 Excellence in Education Award," said Monterey County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Deneen Guss. "They are building the next generation of leaders who are informed, compassionate, and unafraid to advocate for a better future."

Founded by the Women's Fund of the Community Foundation for Monterey County and operated as a Signature Program of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County (BGCMC), every year GHGH provides hundreds of girls ages 8 to 18 with comprehensive health resources, hands-on learning opportunities, and the tools to lead positive change in their communities.

"Receiving the Excellence in Education Award is an incredible honor for our team, and a meaningful affirmation of the work we do every day to uplift girls across Monterey County," said Marlene Trotter-Murray, Sr. Impact Director of BGCMC. "This recognition is in honor of all the girls we have served over the years and the dedication of our staff who believe in empowering girls to be informed leaders, engaged community members, and be their authentic selves."

The award celebrates GHGH's visionary partnerships with our schools to create lasting impact in youth leadership, wellness, and community well-being across Monterey County. "We are incredibly proud to celebrate Girls' Health in Girls' Hands with this year's Excellence in Education Award," says MCSBA President David Gaboni. "Through their transformational programming, they are not only empowering girls but also advancing community wellness and equity across our county."

**About the Monterey County School Boards Association:** *The Monterey County School Boards Association (MCSBA) helps governance teams fulfill their school district's educational missions by providing information and training on governance standards and current issues. MCSBA consists of one representative from each of the 24 school districts, two community colleges, and the county board of education.*

**Excellence in Education Award Criteria:** *A program that is available and accessible to students countywide, has a transformative and significant impact on students' quality of life, demonstrates a commitment to exceeding expectations, and addresses substantial, unmet student needs.*