



Maynard named year's best

Ojai Education Foundation recognizes teacher as Education Hero of the Year

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OVN contributor

Among an impressive array of outstanding educators in our public schools in Ojai, the Ojai Education Foundation selected Cathy Maynard as its 2007 Education Hero of the Year. Maynard, an outstanding educator with a 26-year-long history of teaching, 17 of those years here in Ojai, will receive the award at the Ojai Education Foundation's "Garden of Knowledge" on Sept. 8.

Maynard is being recognized for her enthusiasm, dedication, and her districtwide effect on improving the educational experience for students, teachers and staff.

OEF is not alone in recognizing the work of Maynard. She was selected as Teacher of the Year at Mira Monte in 1995, and recognized again this year by the staff at Topa Topa. "Cathy has this wonderful way of working with others," explains Topa Topa principal John LeSuer. "She's able to make effective changes with the respect of everyone in a real positive way. She asks how she can help others and she's right there, as part of the change process," he adds.

After learning about OEF's selection, OUSD superintendent Tim Baird wholeheartedly agreed, "Cathy is one of our best teachers in the district and she is very deserving of this award."

Maynard explains that the feeling is mutual. "We have exceptional teachers in the Ojai Unified School District and I am constantly learning from my colleagues. Ojai Unified School District is an outstanding place to work. The teachers are dedicated professionals, I have a supportive administration, the support staff is kind and helpful, and I have great



Cathy Maynard, a 26-year teaching veteran and 1974 Nordhoff High School graduate, has taught at Montessori School and the Ventura and Ojai Unified School districts.

students to teach!"

Maynard says, "I have always enjoyed learning and going to school." In first grade she had already decided she wanted to be a teacher. As she grew older she "realized that teaching was a profession where I can share my enthusiasm for learning with others, continue to be a lifelong learner, and work with children."

A 1974 graduate of Nordhoff High School, some of her early mentors included a Nordhoff teacher. "Mr. Vail, the leader of the Future Teachers of America Club, provided support and encouragement to us regarding how to become a teacher," she explains. She also found a mentor in her friend, Dee Konczal, who

taught visually impaired children in Ventura. "She served as a mentor for me by providing an opportunity for me to get classroom experience in many different types of classrooms, and she gave me a lot of encouragement and support along the way as I was just becoming a teacher."

Maynard received her associate's degree in early childhood education from Ventura College in 1977. She completed her

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bachelor's degree in liberal arts from California State University-Northridge in the following year and received her multiple subjects teaching credential from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1979. In 2001 she received her master's of education, focusing on reading and language, from the University of LaVerne.

Maynard began her career teaching kindergarten and first grade students for the Ventura Unified School District. Taking a few years off while her sons were young, Maynard continued her teaching at the Montessori School in Ojai. In 1991 she began substitute teaching in OUSD and was hired to teach at Mira Monte in the following year. Starting in 2006 she transferred to Topa Topa Elementary School and began what she refers to as her "dream job" teaching kindergarten part time with Alexandra Mejia and serving part time as an intervention coach for the district to develop intervention programs for an entire school or a specific grade level or a student together with teachers.

The Ojai Education Foundation is a nonprofit, community-based organization that raises money to improve the educational experience of Ojai's public school students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

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• Oliver Thacher Ayala was born June 13, 2007, to Tony and Emily Ayala, of Ojai

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