

RUNNING SPRINGS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PTA HONORARY
SERVICE AWARDS

May 22, 2018



*One of the Greatest Gifts You Can Give
is the Gift of Your Time!*

Thank You for Making a Difference!

CONNIE LASLEY

Very Special Person Award

The recipient of our Very Special Person Award is Connie Lasley and indeed she is truly a very special person. The PTA here at Running Springs has had the pleasure of knowing and working with Connie for the past several years as the Manager of Operations at Chick-fil-A in Yorba Linda.

What makes Connie so special is her dedication to the community and our school. Ms. Lasley has always gone out of her way to make our kids happy by scheduling the much beloved cow mascot to attend our fundraisers even when the timing or scheduling was tight. Our kids were never disappointed and to see the smiles on their faces when the cow danced on stage or cheered them on the field has been absolutely priceless!

Her dedication doesn't stop at scheduling, last year Ms. Lasley and the mascot handed out warm biscuits to parents dropping off their kiddos the morning of the Dance-a-Thon. She also personally packages and delivered over 200 boxed lunches to the luncheon with Mr. McLaughlin on a Friday when she was struggling to meet the busy demands of lunch hour at the store. Ms. Lasley has donated many meal and ice-cream cone coupons and above all she has done everything with pure cheerfulness.

Thank you Connie for your unfailing dedication to our school and our children, your warmth, welcoming personality, and positive attitude will always be remembered and much appreciated.

Please help me in thanking Connie Lasley as we honor her with the PTA's Very Special Person Award!

RUNNING SPRINGS ELEMENTARY STAFF

Very Special Person Award

Imagine a day when you look up in the sky and can see there are smoke clouds in the direction of your child's school and then you get a PACE call from the principal stating not to worry, but your child's school is being evacuated. Well as we all know that was a reality for the families of Running Springs this school year with the Canyon 2 Fire.

All schools practice fire drills, but no matter the number of times you practice you never know what the factors will be and evacuating one's school is not part of the scenario done in these drills.

As parents frantically rushed to the school, teachers and staff helped direct parents to their child's class as they were trying to line kids up in the Multi-Purpose Room to load buses. For those parents that came to school, there was a sense of calm and order. Worried students were comforted, what could have been utter chaos was instead teamwork at its finest.

For those parents that picked their students up at Canyon High, they too found the same situation. Safe children, concerned teachers and the desire for order so children could be released to their parents as quickly as possible.

Are we surprised by this? Probably not, but in addition to this there are extraordinary things our teachers and staff did that day and the days to come! Many of our teachers have children that also attend Running Springs. All of them put our children first and knew and trusted their children with their fellow teachers. Many of our teachers and staff live near the school. All of the teachers loaded the buses with their students and made sure they were safely evacuated and staff stayed onsite to secure the school, not knowing how quickly the fire would spread and if they would even have the opportunity to get into their homes to collect their valuables. Many of our teachers stayed with fellow teachers at Canyon High until every student was picked up, not knowing if they would be able to get back to their cars or what roads would be open to make their commutes home. As school was required to stay closed for a few days, Mr. McLaughlin, teachers and staff came back early to clean the classrooms, so students could return as soon as possible. And as families returned to Running Springs, they were greeted with posters and banners saying welcome back. Plus they have taken the time to honestly evaluate that scary day and adjust areas that will improve the safety of our school and our children.

If parents ever had a doubt of Running Springs teachers and staff's commitment to its students, there was no doubt that day!

Each year the PTA honors an Outstanding Faculty Member, but this year we would like to honor the entire Running Springs Staff. Mr. McLaughlin could you please come to the front. Teachers could you please stand. Any additional staff in the audience could you please stand.

On behalf of your PTA, we would like to honor Running Springs principal, Mr. McLaughlin, its teachers and its staff with the Very Special Person Award. Thank you again for putting our children first not only that day, but each day they are in your hands! Our children and their families are very lucky to have all of you!

KERENA MENDEZ

Honorary Service Award

The person receiving this Honorary Service Award is more than deserving! As many parents, she is a hands on mom. She covers all the bases – loves to do crafts, a great cook, creative, smart and lots of fun! She jumped into motherhood by being an active member of the Anaheim Hills chapter of Moms Group. She served on their executive board as their activities person and public relations. Little did she know or did the PTA know that when her child started TK that her commitment to her children would improve our very own PTA unit!

Of course she volunteered to be a room parent her first year at Running Springs and in no time it was evident that she was a volunteer extraordinaire. The PTA's Executive Board ended up needing to fill its secretary position that year and when asked if she would fill this open spot, with a little extra encouragement, she agreed to take it! As the year continued it was clear she did any job she had at 110%. Minutes were perfect, updated quickly and archived precisely. In all of this, PTA was starting to panic a little since we were needing to find someone to take over our website, which has been created and run by just one person ever. This person volunteered to take over the website at the end of the year. PTA was relieved, but also in store for an exciting future!

After a year being the PTA webmaster, she decided it was time to hold our hands and take Running Springs PTA to the next level. She, with the help of her husband, Ro, gave our PTA website an overhaul and facelift. She then established a Facebook for our PTA, an Instagram account and a Twitter account. She has painlessly taken us into the 21st century and provided social media platforms for our PTA to communicate, share and inform our parents. She single handedly bridged the gap from the old school paper communication style to instant 24 hour access to our families, guaranteeing we can touch more people.

Her personal touch can be seen on all she posts. From perfectly picked clip art. To originally designed logos. To her witty writing. She is always one step ahead thinking of what families should know and how to grab their attention to read about it! The PTA and the families of Running Springs have come to depend on her to keep us in the know!

All of PTA depends on her. She does so much behind the scenes for our chairmen and never expects the round of applause in the spotlight. She has done the Talent Show Program and logo the last two years. She designed the new Family Fun Night Logo this year. Numerous room parents have asked her for help with logos and designs. If you ask, she'll do it and do it in record speed!

Though with all of her talents, her favorite role is still definitely mom to her daughter, Paige, and son, Nolan. They are two very, very lucky kids!

Please help me in congratulating Kerena Mendez as we honor her tonight with the PTA Honorary Service Award. There are not enough "likes", "hashtags" or "shares" to thank you for making such a positive impact to our PTA.

CRYSTAL LANTELLO Honorary Service Award

The following person has distinguished herself as one of the most dedicated PTA members in our community.

We can all agree that she has contributed countless volunteer hours to our school and children. She had always been an active volunteer in her daughters' classrooms, but the PTA struck gold when she agreed to co-chair it's ever popular Family Fun Night. Little did the PTA know this one event would gain them one of the most dedicated, hardworking parents it has ever seen! Her organization skills, preplanning and work ethic took our Family Fun Night to the next level. She found a way to once again offer full meals to our families and is never satisfied with the status quo and has added new games each year. What should have been a two year commitment turned to three, as we struggled to find a chair this year, she wasn't going to let the ball drop and forged ahead to have another successful event. Her commitment doesn't stop there though. She has been room parent for both of her daughters classes, she volunteers in not only her daughters' classrooms, but for any teacher that might need help and is at every event lending a hand. This year she has taken on the yearbook chairman position and has spent hours making sure she gets all our students smiling faces in the yearbook and co-chaired Red Ribbon Week. If there is a job to be done to benefit any child, she's willing to help. Believe it or not though, her volunteering doesn't end with PTA.

There are cookie moms and then there is this mom! She is just not a cookie mom, she is truly an inspiration. Her exceptional service to the girl scouts has been unmatched! She takes on the very stressful task of cookie sales and organization every single year. And every single year her troop places as one of the top selling troops, she goes above and beyond to secure booths for the troop. She encourages all the girls to sell as many cookies as possible and she personally meets with parents to discuss cookie sales and gives advice to the girls on how to increase sales. She picks up the many boxes of cookies and stores them in her garage and cheerfully meets with parents for cookie pickup or money drop off. She does all of this with an amazingly positive and welcoming attitude and welcomes everyone into her home to discuss the details of the sales.

She's not only a cookie mom she's also a volunteer soccer coach! She takes on every task with courage and heart even when she's not familiar with it like when she took on coaching a recreational soccer team for two years. She had no coaching experience, but she was dedicated and thought herself to coach, the girls loved her and the parents loved her even more when she stepped up to coach a team that was left without a coach. She did so well that several of the girls moved up to signature or club soccer including her own daughter.

Thank you to her husband, Jeff and her two lucky daughters, Cierra and Jillian for sharing her with us.

The PTA is honored to present the HSA award to our much beloved Crystal Lantello. Thank you Crystal Lantello for your continued and exemplary dedication to our children and the community. You are truly an inspiration to everyone!

GEN ROMERO Golden Oak Award

I have the honor of presenting the PTA's Golden Oak Award. This award is the most prestigious honor PTA can bestow on a volunteer.

When you imagine an oak tree, you can see a tall, magnificent tree with leaves that produce awesome colors in the autumn. If you look closely you can see it's wide spread branches intertwined with smaller branches that appear to be attempting to go in every direction at once. The branches spread out to shade all areas around it.

The person I am honored to introduce tonight has spent the last 6 years at Running Springs just like the oak tree. Her family arrived at Running Springs and she firmly planted her roots here and has grown in her volunteerism and commitment to PTA giving her time in so many areas.

If there is something to be done, she is the first to volunteer, There is no job too big or too small that she's willing to do. Her days are committed to not only her child, but all the children at Running Springs. She received an Honorary Service Award a few years ago. At that time, she had been a room parent every year. She had been the yearbook chairman and she was serving on the PTA Executive Board as its treasurer, but this was just the start to her ability to give!

Since that time she has taken her commitment to PTA to the next level... literally! She has served as the Vice President of the Orange County Councils of PTA and was voted in last year as it's President. She will serve a second term next school year. In addition, she has accepted the position of Vice President at El Rancho Middle School next year. She is a true example of the PTA slogan, "Every Child. One Voice".

Her commitment at Running Springs has not just been with PTA, she has been the chair for the school's picture days, she has served two terms on the School Site Council and every child on campus knows "Mrs. Romero", their favorite noon supervisor.

We are fortunate at Running Springs to have volunteers, but we have been blessed to have a volunteer that has given their heart and soul the entire time they have been here. She is willing to lend a hand whenever needed, she has made sure we had goodies to eat anytime she was in charge of something and she has gone above and beyond to make sure not to miss a minute of her son Jonathan's time at Running Springs! She too has been lucky in that her husband, Enrique, is always willing to be her right hand man at so many events!

I've been fortunate to work along side her, to cheer for her and to call her my friend. Running Springs will not be the same next year without her here! It is my honor tonight to present Gen Romero with the Golden Oak Award. Thank you Gen for all you have done for Running Springs and PTA!

JENNIFER AHRENDT Golden Oak Award

We are fortunate to have two outstanding women receiving the Golden Oak Award this evening. As I shared it is the highest and most prestigious award the PTA gives. I love the saying, "Leadership is not a position or title, it is action and example". This person lives true to these words in every role she takes on.

She has spent the last 10 years at Running Springs as an active leader in Running Springs PTA. She has served as the yearbook chair and volunteered on numerous committees. Of those 10 years here at Running Springs she has spent most of them as a valuable member of the PTA's Executive Board. Serving in the positions of Historian, Vice President of Membership, Executive Vice President, Parliamentarian, Vice President of Legislation and lucky for us, as PTA President. That's 9 years of her 10 years here.... pretty impressive! Her common sense, commitment to accuracy and her rich history of years past has made her a valued tenured parent that others look to for guidance. Her approach to leadership is key - no nonsense, be prepared and have trust in your team. She was an amazing president! Always available to bounce ideas off of, provided a clear goal for everyone and was your number one supporter! Letting others take the spotlight for their accomplishments and reminding all those around her how important and appreciated their time and effort was! She left her footprint with PTA as president, by being instrumental in getting all the PTA First Day Packets available online which started an easy, modern way that we all take for granted now. She always puts a personal touch on all she does and we have all enjoyed her adorable thank you crafts and installation gifts.

Her commitment to PTA and our families does not end at Running Springs. She served two years as the Executive Vice President at El Rancho Middle School and with the board still having a vacancy, she was Parliamentarian this year, even without a child attending El Rancho. We are all excited that she has accepted the position as President next year and know that the El Rancho PTSA is going to be in very capable hands.

This person's volunteerism isn't just to PTA. She was the Director of Marketing for OC Surf and currently is their Fanwear Committee Chair.

Her greatest role to date though is being her family's biggest cheerleader! She is the number one fan for her husband Patrick and her daughters, Sabrina and Angelina. If her daughters are interested in an activity, be it Girl Scouts, soccer or cheer, she's there to shuttle them and cheer on the sidelines! They are very lucky girls to have such an outstanding mom!

Running Springs PTA honors individuals each year, but this person's contributions have been so amazing that she has been honored in years past with the Honorary Service Award and the Continuing Service Award. Tonight there is no doubt this person has more than earned the Golden Oak Award. I feel fortunate to have volunteered beside her, grateful to have learned so much from her and truly blessed to call her my friend! On behalf of the Running Springs PTA, please help me in congratulating and thanking Jennifer Ahrendt for all her years of service by presenting her with the Golden Oak Award. Congratulations ~ Running Springs PTA will not be the same without its Jersey Jen!