

J A N U A R Y 2 5 , 2 0 1 8

# *For the* **CUSD** *Board & Staff* A DESTINATION DISTRICT

## ✂ Special Edition ✂

In a new year, we always look for the new start, the new beginning, the new diet, the new fast, the new mindset, the new goals, the new hope, and the new expectations and dreams. And, in that process, we look for and root on the new champions especially looking at the results of the College Football National Championship and the now February Super Bowl, (February 3 by the way).

I could not help but become enamored and impressed by the new College Football National Champion Coach Dabo Swinney with his comments, humility, and enthusiasm that came so natural from a man who is clearly committed to his program and students. Notice I called them students; not players. I did that because that is how I saw his students through his eyes. That perspective came to me because of a quote the television commentators repeated during the game. They stated Coach Swinney's popular quote is,



*"I teach to their heart; not their talents."*

This reminds me of what many of our staff does with our students throughout our district. There is a difference between using students or players for their talents distinct from developing them to draw out and grow/mature with their abilities. These types of educators see gifts, skills, and value in each child that has yet to be revealed and they are masters at getting them to see them for themselves. This is not a new concept for this new year, but nevertheless, it will be new for those kids that see what is truly inside them!

*Every Corcoran Student Can Achieve!*



**Honoring our District's**

**Administrator of the Year**

*Mr. Ed Larkin*

**Teacher of the Year**

*Mr. Isaías Ramirez*

**Employee of the Year**

*Mrs. Esmeralda Barajas*





# Ed Larkin

## *Administrator of the Year*

Antonia Stone was very pleased to nominate Ed Larkin for Administrator of the Year. Ed is a Learning Director at Corcoran High School, and has easily become the definition of positivity and intervention on the campus. He has been put in a number of very difficult situations and he maintains a cheery and positive demeanor, and having seen the situation to a successful outcome. If you ask him he will tell you that he is “hard core” and is working on smiling more, but he doesn’t give himself enough credit. He is very approachable and truly has the students’ best interest at heart. He has a huge soft spot for working with our students. He is moved by their stories and makes it a point to work with every student at their need. He listens to student issues with the goal of putting it into perspective and so the students walk away having learned something important. He is incredibly witty and hardworking, often the first one to volunteer to sub, help out, take on an additional responsibility or help a fellow colleague. He is self-motivated and wants the best possible leader for the school. He has been an outstanding addition to the administrative team.

Ed is completely committed to his work both as a curriculum guide and with a student-centered focus. He is a role model and ethical. He has led countless conflict resolutions to promote problem solving. He values our diverse population, and he believes in reaching out to parents as partners for student success. He has a host of responsibilities including discipline, conflict resolution, mediating parent conferences, classroom observation, teacher evaluation, CAASPP testing, supervision duty, academic/guidance counseling, and transcript evaluation.

Ed is assigned a number of teachers to evaluate, and one of the most notable comments from these teachers is the packet he prepares for them to start the year. The cover page is a warm introductory letter telling a bit about himself, his philosophy and goals for the year. It sets the tone for the teachers he will be working with. It also tells them that he believes in collaboration and that they are an important part of the process.

Ed is a dynamic example of a growth mindset, and having him on the High school campus is truly an awesome asset. He is incredibly open minded, forward thinking, solution oriented and an incredibly dedicated and positive force. Antonia can think of no other more deserving of this recognition.

# Isaias Ramirez

## *Teacher of the Year*

Alisa Gomez saw it as an absolute pleasure to nominate Isaias Ramirez from Corcoran High School. She has known him for 15 years and is astonished by the amount of work and dedication he puts into his students and athletes.

Long before the district brought Kagan to Corcoran Unified, Isaias was using cooperative student centered learning strategies to deliver and learn material. He uses the jigsaw strategy primarily in his sports medicine class, where students are responsible for learning about a certain joint or injury and teaching it to their classmates. He believes that in order to teach something, you must understand it in all its entirety. He circulates the room to make sure the students are delivering not only the correct information, but the key points he thinks need to be delivered. He also expects his students to check for understanding among their classmates while they are teaching their part.

Isaias incorporates Personalized Learning into his classroom practice. One of the components of Personalized Learning is Targeted Instruction, which includes collecting data on student performance and using the results to guide instruction. Most teachers do this within the walls of their own classroom. Although Isaias collects data in the classroom, he also spends a large amount of time collecting data outside the 4 walls of his classroom. He attends every sporting event that he can, watches and evaluates his students during the game, and identifies areas of weakness, formulating a plan to address those issues in class. The students are bigger, stronger, faster, and do better in sports as a result of the class they take with him and the personalization he puts into each and every one of them. He is seen day and night, over the summer and during the weekends, working with these athletes, often sacrificing his own time and life for his students. As you look at the state standards for PE, they seem elementary to what he is doing in class. He goes above and beyond in all measures of his work.

Isaias has high expectations and will not lower them just because the students aren't meeting them. He will push the students to meet the goal, providing support and instructional scaffolding when needed. Isaias is one of the most ethically sound people I know. The following quote has his name written all over it, "Do what is right, even if nobody is looking." Isaias instills morals, values, and ethics in his students and athletes. His athletes know to hold doors open for people, use their pleases and thank you's, and allow others to order first at a restaurant when the team is in a long line for a meal. He teaches them to be humble in their winnings and generous in defeat. His team is often seen "high fiving" the other teams after a race. He expects his students and athletes to be accepting of everyone, even if they are not like them. He gives his students skills that teens these days so desperately lack. I guess one could call him old fashioned when it comes to this, and I'm glad the students get a taste of that.

Isaias stresses the importance of being a part of their community. He is the first one to be called upon when the Chamber of Commerce or one of the service organizations needs youthful manpower to run one of their events. His teams can always be found selling fireworks alongside the Kiwanis club for 4th of July. The local Rotary leans on Isaias and his students to set up, clean up, and serve crab at the local Crab Feed & Wine & Cheese event. His students are always the first ones up on a morning of the Cotton Festival Parade, as they are the ones that set up and break down street barriers for the Cotton Festival and Christmas Parades. They oversee the game booths at the Cotton Festival and the Kid's Day in the Park, which is a fundraiser for Valley Children's Hospital. His students also run the hydration stations during the Annual Corcoran 5k run, and put on their own CHS Alumni Race in the summer. In addition to serving the community of Corcoran, Isaias serves many other communities by being on their advisory committees for their programs at school.

Isaias Ramirez is a shining star and a prime example of what every teacher should strive to be. Alisa is pleased to see him recognized for all his hard work and dedication to the students at Corcoran High School.





# Esmeralda Barajas

## *Employee of the Year*

Esmeralda Barajas is Corcoran High School's registrar who was nominated for Employee of the Year by Antonia Stone. Antonia states, "Esmeralda has a number of standout attributes that make her completely deserving of this recognition. She is incredibly hardworking with a solid work ethic and professionalism. She comes to work with an exceptionally positive demeanor. She greets all staff and students with a "Good morning," and "How are you?" She is very humble and genuinely cares about her work and the students, knowing so many of them by name and by family."

Esmeralda is the face of the counseling office and some of her duties include managing new enrollees, transcripts, grading, and phone calls, student files and keeps tabs on all of the learning directors. She consistently has a positive and cheery demeanor. She is a great communicator and very well loved by the entire staff.

What's more notable is Esmeralda's strong connection with the students. She volunteers to be the advisor for the California Scholarship Federation, and she has made it a goal to continually increase the number of students who are a part of CSF. This means regularly checking eligibility, reaching out to and working with students. She develops positive rapport with them and encourages them at every chance she gets. Students will go into the counseling office just to be able to say, "Hi," to her. She has also taken on the responsibility of caring for students with special needs, often being a part of their support plan if a student requires assistance due to health issues or some other need.

Esmeralda's office is also often the first place students with behavior issues go, so she takes this as an opportunity to remind them about the rules, refocusing them, and keeping a keen eye on them. She does this with kindness, and it is in these moments that it is very obvious she loves her job and working with her colleagues, parents and students.

Esmeralda is an outstanding model of support for the staff, admin, students and parents. She greets everyone with a smile and it always willing to go the extra mile to help every person that sets foot in the counseling office. Often times we are short on supervision for lunch or after school, and Esmeralda can always be counted on to help out when she is needed. She is an incredible addition to the team at Corcoran High School.





# 2019 YOUR YEAR TO SHINE

Extremely proud of our Employee of the Year,  
Teacher of the Year, and Administrator of the  
Year! 💙💛🏆💙💛

