

Celebrating Great Teachers

In its efforts to attract new professionals to teaching and retain great teachers, the Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) was interested in celebrating the best of Sonoma County's teachers.

We teamed up with a local radio station and a local credit union started by teachers to create a Teacher of the Month program. The radio station, Mix 104.9, runs ongoing ads encouraging listeners to nominate their or their child's favorite teacher. Local businesses underwrite the cost of a beautiful plaque for each recipient as well as a \$400 gift card for teachers to use in the classroom. The response has been overwhelming. Hundreds of tear-jerking, heart-warming nominations have poured in. The idea was for the program to advertise itself, with listeners being inspired to participate by hearing moving stories of past winners. The strategy has worked. The event is nearing the end of its third month, and each month the number of nominations has grown. We received about 60 the first month and are now getting well over 100. Parents and students were clearly eager for the opportunity to celebrate their best teachers.

Not only have we engaged the community in celebrating great teachers — we've been able to inspire others with the beautiful stories behind each of the winning teachers. After each winner is chosen by the communications office at SCOE, we arrange a time to surprise the teacher at school. We follow that up with a press release and story displayed prominently on our website and social media sites, photos and video, and on-air recognitions. As well, we will be honoring the winners, as well as runners up, with their pictures on 14 county bus signs during our traditional teacher recognition period in April and May.

Press Releases:

http://www.scoe.org/pub/htdocs/news-archive.html?news_id=854

http://www.scoe.org/pub/htdocs/news-archive.html?news_id=856

Radio Station Page:

<http://www.mix1049.com/mix-104-9s-teacher-of-the-month/>