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News Release

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Bruhnke Receives Outstanding Teachers of America Award The San Pedro High School Educator Was One of Five Honored Statewide

LOS ANGELES – Karin Bruhnke, who has taught world history and U.S. government at San Pedro High School for nearly 20 years, received the 2014 Carlston Family Foundation Outstanding Teachers of America Award.



Bruhnke is one of only five teachers earning such honors this year, and the only one in the Los Angeles Unified School District. She was among those feted over the weekend at the foundation’s annual awards ceremony.

“The Bruhnke family has a proud tradition of educators,” said Dr. Richard Vladovic, president of the Los Angeles Board of Education. “Karin is a great example of this legacy and maintains a long standing commitment to educating children. She is well deserving of such an honor.”

Superintendent Ramon Cortines agreed. “I congratulate Ms. Bruhnke for receiving this award, which emphasizes the affect she has had on students’ lives. She is another of the wonderful, dedicated, hard-working teachers we have in the Los Angeles Unified School District, and we are proud to have her.”

Exceptional public high school teachers in California receive the awards. Former students, who attend or graduated from four-year colleges and believe a teacher changed their lives, must nominate them.

“The award is an affirmation that this job and how I do it is as rewarding for my students as it is for me,” Bruhnke said. “I appreciate so much that the award was student-generated by young people who valued the relationships we established and the hard work we shared.”

The foundation received this year more than 75 nominations statewide, selecting 10 finalists. A minimum of five former students, the school principal and at least two colleagues were asked to explain about the teacher’s use of best practices and educational philosophy. The board considered a broad range of information when making their final selections.

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In a letter announcing Bruhnke's honor, the foundation's Executive Director Timothy Allen said these conversations revealed that students benefitted from her instructional skills, as well as her personal guidance. These "significantly contributed" to academic and personal success of her students, he said.

"The ultimate result of your consistent efforts has provided these individuals with the academic knowledge and individual confidence to continue to challenge themselves at the next level of their education, as well as in their personal lives," Allen stated in the letter. "It was their stories, demonstrating your extraordinary efforts to educate, inspire, and encourage students, I shared with the board and what they considered most when selecting you as one of the five 2014 honorees."

Each winning teacher receives a \$20,000 prize, including \$15,000 for personal use, and a \$5,000 grant for the school that Bruhnke will determine how to spend. Allen will formally present Bruhnke her award at a Los Angeles Board of Education meeting or a committee meeting in coming months.

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Photo: Teacher Karin Bruhnke with Deshawn Sambrano, a former student who nominated her for the award.