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Clark County Teacher Alvin Dizon Recognized as an Inspirational Teacher and Recipient of the Inaugural Sanford Teacher Award by the National University System

Dizon is one of five PreK-12 teachers who are being recognized as part of the launch of a national competition to recognize inspiring teachers from each state; The awards, supported by philanthropist T. Denny Sanford, reflect the mission of the Sanford Harmony and Sanford Inspire programs

Oct. 19, 2018 – Clark County, NV – In recognition of teachers who inspire students to achieve their greatest potential, National University System has launched the first annual [Sanford Teacher Award](#), a half-million dollar award campaign to honor the nation's top inspiring PreK-12 teachers. The Sanford Teacher Award competition, which concludes Nov. 1, will award the top inspirational teacher in each state with \$10,000, with the exception of one top teacher who will be named a national winner and receive a grand award of \$50,000. As part of the outreach activities, eighth grade teacher Alvin Dizon, of Robert O. Gibson Middle School in the Clark County School District, was recognized for being one of five inaugural Sanford Teacher Award recipients identified for their commitment to creating inspirational and harmonious classrooms that support student development and achievement.

To celebrate the Sanford Teacher Award launch, Dizon was surprised with a \$10,000 cash award after being recognized as representing the key characteristics of inspiring teaching that are central to the Sanford Teacher Award. Surprise celebrations were previously held in honor of the other inaugural award recipients in Los Angeles, Dallas and San Diego, and the final inaugural award recipient will be honored in New York City next week. As an inaugural Sanford Teacher Award recipient, Dizon was chosen for his dedication to creating a supportive classroom culture for students by emphasizing mutual respect and acceptance through engaging social emotional learning curriculum.

The five are supporting efforts in raising awareness of the national Sanford Teacher Awards competition, leading up to the announcement of the additional 50 winners in November. The Sanford Teacher Award also celebrates the commitment of philanthropist T. Denny Sanford, who is the visionary behind two research-based pre-college programs that are being expanded nationally through the leadership of the private, nonprofit National University System: Sanford Harmony is a PreK-6 social emotional learning program that helps children develop communication and collaboration skills, and the PreK-12 Sanford Inspire offers teachers research-based resources and lessons to create inspiring classroom experiences.

“There is no higher calling than being a teacher, and as the teacher workforce is under heavy demands, it is important to provide educators ongoing professional development that supports and inspires them in their classrooms,” said Dr. Michael R. Cunningham, Chancellor of the

National University System, a network of nonprofit education institutions that serve lifelong learners from PreK to graduate level. “Teachers are the driving force of innovation in education, so we are honored to collaborate with Denny Sanford on the national expansion of the Sanford Programs and we congratulate the inaugural five recipients for their commitment to creating meaningful learning experiences for their students.”

The Sanford Teacher Awards are part of the national expansion efforts of the three Sanford Programs, which also includes a nationwide network of institutes anchored by the Sanford Institute of Philanthropy at National University that offers training programs for front-line nonprofit fundraisers. All three programs are based on the vision of Mr. Sanford, who has donated about \$130 million toward their national expansion effort led by the San Diego-based National University System – an effort that involves the collaboration of universities around the country that share a similar focus and dedication to the professional support of educators and the nonprofit sector. To date, more than 3 million people have been impacted by the programs.

“As a child, I was fortunate to have a few teachers who truly inspired me to learn and succeed. Educators have many similar opportunities to touch children’s lives and make meaningful impacts that can last a lifetime,” said Mr. Sanford. “As an entrepreneur and philanthropist, I can think of no better return on investment than inspiring students to embrace learning and find their path in life.”

[Sanford Harmony](#) is a PreK-6 research-based social-emotional learning program that cultivates strong classroom relationships between all students. Sanford Harmony has been recognized by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) as a quality program, and is reaching more than a million students nationwide, including in the largest school districts, through easy-to-integrate lessons, activity cards and story books that encourage students to develop empathy, communication skills, and positive peer relationships by learning how to collaborate and look beyond perceived differences.

As the nation faces an increasing teacher shortage exacerbated by teacher retention challenges, the PreK-12 [Sanford Inspire](#) offers a toolkit of research-based teaching methodologies, and on-demand, self-guided modules that are accessible online to help teachers create inspiring classroom environments that encourage students to succeed. The Sanford College of Education at National University, which has a campus in Henderson, is also a leader among a growing number of universities that have integrated Inspire principles into their teacher education curriculum. In conjunction with the Clark County School District, National University also supports inspiring teaching by offering an accelerated, affordable pathway toward a teaching degree through the APPLE program (an acronym for Accelerated Preparation Pathway to Licensure and Employment).

The criteria for selecting 50 Sanford Teacher Award winners, which will be announced by November 2018, is based on the following characteristics of inspiring teaching: Enthusiasm for teaching; empathy and warmth towards all students; fosters positive relationships with all students; creates a positive learning environment; and recognizes student strengths. The finalists’ nominations form will be reviewed by a selection committee based at National

University in La Jolla, California. To learn more about the Sanford Teacher Award and nominate an inspirational teacher, visit the [Sanford Teacher Award page](#).

[*View Fox5 Las Vegas coverage of the award presentation*](#)

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About the National University System

The National University System is a network of accredited nonprofit education institutions serving higher education and K-12 students that includes National University, John F. Kennedy University, City University of Seattle, and the Division of Pre-College Programs. Established in 2001 to meet the emerging challenges and demands of education in the 21st Century, the network's complementary universities offer pathways for students to attain professional and terminal degrees through quality and innovative programs delivered in a format that is flexible to the needs of adult learners. The anchor institution, [National University](#), was founded in 1971 and is among the largest private, nonprofit institutions of higher education in California with more than 150,000 alumni. For more information on the National University System: <https://www.nusystem.org>.

About the Sanford Education Center and Sanford College of Education at National University

The Sanford Education Center at National University was established in 2014 through the generous support of philanthropist T. Denny Sanford to provide innovative programs in the nonprofit and PreK-12 sectors. The Center, in coordination with universities around the country, is leading the national expansion of three initiatives: Sanford Harmony, Sanford Inspire and the Sanford Institute of Philanthropy. The Center's initiatives are supported by the National University System, National University, and the University's [Sanford College of Education](#), which is named after Mr. Sanford in recognition of his role in developing and supporting programs that promote prosocial behavior among children. The College is among the Top Ten largest schools of education in the country and prepares more teachers than any other university in the state of California. Learn more: sanfordprograms.org