



GROSSMONT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

For further information contact:
Catherine Martin, Public Affairs
(619) 644-8082

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, November 28, 2006

GUHSD NAMES PAULA ANN TREVINO & GARRY WILCOX EDUCATION INNOVATOR OF THE MONTH RECIPIENTS

Helix Charter High School Teachers Recognized for Innovation

(EL CAJON, CA)—The Grossmont Union High School District has named Helix Charter High School teachers Paula Ann Trevino and Garry Wilcox as its Education Innovator of the Month recipients. Superintendent Terry Ryan said, “We are honored to have these fine teachers in the Grossmont District. They exude enthusiasm and are blazing new trails in their efforts to provide superior learning opportunities for Helix Charter students.”

This duo has been a driving force behind using innovative technology to get students engaged. After meeting with Dr. Ming-Hsiang Tsou, an Associate Professor of Geography at San Diego State University over two years ago, the pair embarked on an ambitious journey to introduce Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology into the high school curriculum at Helix. GIS are cutting-edge technological tools that are valuable in problem-based learning and are applied in many disciplines, including business management, biology, public health, civil engineering, geosciences, and geography.

The course-level collaboration between Ms. Trevino and Mr. Wilcox was borne out of a desire to provide Helix students with superior educational opportunities that equip them with the essential skills required in the 21st Century workforce. GIS, along with nanotechnology and biotechnology, have been identified as the most critical technological skills of the future.

Dr. Ming Tsou said, “Their efforts to incorporate this cutting-edge GIS technology at Helix Charter High School is truly a success story. Their extraordinary teaching experiences and pedagogy could become a national model for all high schools in the United States.”

Ms. Trevino and Mr. Wilcox's students also visited the GIS computer laboratories at San Diego State University. More than 120 Helix Charter High School students experienced a hands-on introduction to GIS and Web technology, and a GPS treasure hunting exercise.

Ms. Trevino and Mr. Wilcox also adopted a Web-based GIS learning module for their Human Geography classes. Students now access Web-based population density maps to visualize the spatial pattern of population growth and birth rates across different countries.

Students are learning to use technology to analyze human and environmental problems. Then, they create a research project tailored to their own interests, ranging from mapping the Seven Wonders of the World to famous ballparks nationwide.

As to what the future holds for this team, Ms. Trevino said, "We can truly see how GIS technology is tied to so many aspects of learning. More importantly, we are excited for what lies ahead in the next few years as we work on creating a stronger partnership with SDSU, for the ultimate benefit of our students."

#