

Fremont teacher to be inducted into women's hall of fame

By Linh Tat

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FREMONT — At a time when overachieving students forgo taking care of their bodies to cram for tests and an increasing number of children are obese, Linda Campana feels her role as a physical education teacher is more crucial than ever.

"The generation that's growing up now will not live as long as my generation has because they are so unhealthy. The students I teach today are so involved in their academics and what college they're going to go to, that they're very stressed out on a daily basis. It's my job to help them find a lifelong activity that they can do long after they leave me to relieve their stress and get through the day," said the 35-year teacher, who's spent most of her career at Mission San Jose High School.

"I'm all for academics, but there's not much of a balance (right now)," she said. "I feel the students need me more than they've ever needed me."

That's why, even in the face of budget cuts, Campana continues to work to inspire young girls.

For more than 10 years, she's been the only full-time female physical education teacher at Mission San Jose, a school of about 2,000 students.

Her conviction and her dedication to helping students have not gone unnoticed.

On April 25, she will join 10 other individuals at a luncheon where they will be inducted into the Alameda County Women's Hall of Fame.

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors, Alameda County Health Care Foundation and the Alameda County Commission on the Status of Women started the Women's Hall of Fame in 1993 to recognize individuals who have contributed to the overall well-being of residents in the area.

Tickets to the luncheon are \$75 each, with proceeds benefiting charities that provide services to women in the county.

Those who nominated Campana for the sports and athletics category credit her for motivating students to make fitness a priority.

"I am very humbled that I am winning this award," Campana said.

"With all the push for math, science and technology, I didn't think anybody would notice what I was doing in PE. This award reinforced my opinion that students do need exercise; they don't just need academics. That's what I preach daily."

The 57-year-old Fremont resident estimates that she's taught 7,000 students during her three decades at the high school. During that period, she's also taught dance and coached eight sports, and led her students to multiple tennis championships.

She believes that her success stems from doing work she's passionate about — so much so, in fact, that she's made passion the theme of the speech she plans to give at the awards ceremony.

"I'm passionate about a healthy lifestyle," she said. "If you follow something you really have a passion for, you're going to end up being happy in the career you choose."

Linh Tat covers education and Union City. Reach her at 510-353-7010 or ltat@bayareanewsgroup.com. Read her blog at www.ibabuzz.com/tricitybeat.

If you go

WHAT: Alameda County Women's Hall of Fame awards luncheon

WHEN: 12:30 p.m. April 25

WHERE: Hs Lordships Restaurant, 199 Seawall Drive, Berkeley

COST: \$75 per ticket

INFO: 510-272-6984 or www.acgov.org