

FEBRUARY 2025 • FREE

What Every Parent's Talking About

# parentingOC

School Hero  
Finalists  
Announced  
*Teachers,  
Employees  
And Leaders*

## THE SUMMER CAMPS

Ninjas, Hikers, Paddlers—  
The Benefits of Extreme Activities

ISSUE

HEALTH, CAMPS & ACTIVITIES, PRE-K TO 12 EDUCATION



# School Hero Goals

We asked last year's School Heroes:  
What are your 2025 goals?

By Jessica Peralta



2024 TOP TEACHER  
**Elizabeth Ellison**

**This year:** teaches eighth grade language arts and comprehensive English, an ELD class for sixth, seventh and eighth grade, an honors language and composition class for seventh and eighth grade and a study skills class for sixth, seventh and eighth grade at Robert C. Fidler School in Fullerton

**Goals:** "Successful vocabulary instruction has always been a goal I have strived to achieve. Helping students develop a strong vocabulary is crucial to helping them develop strong reading comprehension skills. During the most intense week of training I have ever experienced, I learned tools

and strategies that have helped me successfully implement a strong vocabulary program in my classroom. Even though I am in my 31st year of teaching, I know and appreciate that there is always something new to learn. I am excited by opportunities to try out new strategies and instructional practices. When I present lessons to my students, I often reflect on how the lesson went and find myself thinking, 'Next year, I'm going to ...' or 'I think next year it would be good to ...' and I look forward to trying new and innovative ways to teach all of my students."

**This year:** now principal at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School in Santa Ana Unified School District. He served as principal at Franklin Elementary for three years and now serves at King Elementary, a Dual Immersion School.

**Goals:** "The great thing about working at King is that I get to serve in the neighborhood I grew up in. I am very proud of my community and very excited to continue the arts program at King Elementary. We are preparing for our musical, 'The Jungle Book' next month — together the teachers and students have been working

diligently to put on a great show. One of my goals for 2025 is to continue the arts and to promote college and university to our students, parents and the rest of the community by doing pep rallies twice a year with student performances, marching bands and guest speakers. I want to continue the arts to bring the community together by showcasing our students' talents. As we continue these goals, we are also working towards improving our academics in reading, writing and math. King Elementary is an amazing school that is located in the heart of Santa Ana."



2024 TOP LEADER  
**Samuel Perla**



2024 TOP EMPLOYEE  
**Tania Morales**

**This year:** continues serving as the Early Childhood Classroom manager at Beyond Blindness in Santa Ana

**Goals:** "There are a lot of exciting changes in our program. These changes are not only beneficial to the families we

serve but will also support my professional growth. For 2025, my goals are to continue developing as a professional, expanding my knowledge and skills, and to remain dedicated to supporting our families to the best of my ability."