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SANTA MARIA JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

July 17, 2020

The Santa Maria High School Agriculture Department has been selected as the 2020 Outstanding Large Agricultural Education Program Award recipient. The honor was awarded at the California Agriculture Teachers Association's (CATA) 101st Summer Conference, which was held virtually.

The SMHS Agriculture Program earned the recognition due to its excellent achievements in the following areas: classroom instruction, experimental learning, the FFA student organization and leadership development, community partnership, and the teachers' professional development. In California, there are more than 330 agriculture education programs across the state.

Currently, the Saint Agriculture Program has eight agriculture teachers who serve nearly 1,000 students, who are enrolled in 39 sections of agriculture courses.

Instructional courses offered in the Agriculture Department include Agriculture Sciences, Floral Design, Ornamental Horticulture, Agriculture Leadership & Communication and Agriculture Mechanics. Each course is specifically designed to allow students to learn by doing and to make a connection to our local Santa Maria Agriculture Industry through community partnerships.

Additionally, each student in the Agriculture Program is a member of the California and National FFA Organization where the mission of FFA is "making a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education."

Within the Agriculture Program, students have numerous opportunities to attend leadership development events and gain hands-on industry experiences, through their Supervised Agriculture Experiences, classroom instruction, and FFA Career Development Events (CDE).

Department Chair Mark Powell stated, “This being the second time in three years of winning this award is a result of an unwavering collective effort from our agriculture teachers and commitment to providing all of our students, with not only a high-quality education but also an emphasis on instilling leadership and career readiness in our students.”

The current agriculture teachers are Mr. Powell, Marc DeBernardi, Luis Guerra, Clemente Ayon, Melissa Flory, Amanda Rodriguez, Shannon Powell and Sara Araujo.

The last time SMHS Agriculture Department was named the CATA Outstanding Program was in 2017. Prior to that, it was in 1988.

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