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**Escondido Union High School District Spotlight:
San Pasqual High Math Teacher and SuperNURDs Advisor Yun Lutgen**

Escondido, CA – The Escondido Union High School District EUHSD Spotlight highlights one teacher and the work their students are creating each month. San Pasqual High’s Yun Lutgen shares her background, thoughts on teaching math, and sheds light on the history of the SuperNURDs FIRST Robotics team.

Lutgen immigrated from Korea when she was eight years old. She remembers not even knowing what the word ‘hi’ meant when she arrived.

“I didn’t speak one word of English,” said Lutgen. “It makes me feel a lot of compassion for student who are learning the language.”

For Lutgen, being a teacher was always an honorable profession. She struggled to learn the educational system, remembering that even the \$40 fee to apply to college was a financial hurdle but she preserved, choosing to study math because English was so much harder. For her, math was a way to work with young adults. She began her career as a student teacher at San Pasqual High in 2004 and never left.

She started the schools SuperNURDS First Robotics team in 2009 because one student expressed an interest in establishing a robotics program and committed to giving it his all. Within three months of their initial conversation, Lutgen applied for and received a NASA Rookie grant. Now, the SuperNURDs FIRST Robotics Competition team is one of the top teams in the world and is a four-time Regional Winner (comparable to a CIF championship sports win), four-time world champion participant, two-time Entrepreneurship Winner, two-time Deans List winner, and one-time Woodie Flowers winner, to name a few top awards.

Perhaps most notably, though, is the amount of volunteer support the program requires. Under Lutgen's leadership, the program has built a robust volunteer network of community members who commit countless hours of their time to mentor Escondido students. Currently, eight of the 11 volunteer mentors were previously students on the team.

One of those former students is Tayler Uva, a San Pasqual alumnus who majored in Computer Science at California State University San Marcos and now works a full-time job at SDG&E as a software developer and data analyst, in addition to being the SuperNURDs FIRST Robotics head coach. Tayler is but one example of how Lutgen has inspired students through the program as they navigate life after high school. She keeps detailed records of where former SuperNURDs go to school and work after high school and has data showing a large percentage have gone on to pursue degrees in STEM and joined the engineering workforce.

Lutgen says even when she's having a tough day, being able to focus on one student and the impact that can be made one student at a time keeps her inspired and motivated. She credits SuperNURDs with making her a better math teacher.

"FIRST Robotics has given me the ability to work with students after school on a project that is virtually impossible," said Lutgen. "It has helped me accept the fact that I don't know everything in the classroom, and that is ok."

She emphasizes "failing forward" to her students, a concept that she embraces both in the classroom and as SuperNURDs advisor. Throughout her tenure, Lutgen has seen changes in teaching math and is able to relate to those as well.

"In traditional math, a teacher would lecture and give examples on how to use a formula, for example. With the Core Plus curriculum, we are saying we want students to think through a real problem set and give them a reason to learn the math and how to apply it in the real world."

This spring the SuperNURDs were ranked second at the San Diego Regional FIRST Robotics Competition. More information on the district's mathematics program can be found on the district's website at www.euhdsd.org. A complete interview with Lutgen and video of SuperNURDs at work can be viewed at www.smores.com/8qkfb.

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About Escondido Union High School District

The Escondido Union High School District has empowered students to graduate prepared for college, career, and life through excellence in learning for more than 125 years. The district serves more than 7,000 students across five high schools including: Escondido, Orange Glen, and San Pasqual, Del Lago Academy and Valley; as well as the Escondido Adult School. More

than 900 staff members are employed by Escondido Union High School District, which offers more than 180 courses, including nationally recognized Advanced Placement courses, College & Career Technical Education, Independent Study, after school enrichment, career exploration, STEM opportunities, and more.