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March “9Teachers Who Care” Award Announced

Congratulations to Robin Ortiz of Columbine High School

Littleton, CO – 9NEWS and CollegeInvest are pleased to honor Robin Ortiz, a member of the Exceptional Student Services department at Columbine High School, with the March “9Teachers Who Care” award.

As a teacher in the Exceptional Student Services department, Ortiz mainly works with Columbine’s special needs students. According to students, parents and fellow staff members, Ortiz’s commitment and contributions to his students and the Columbine community are unsurpassed.

Lindsey McKee, a student at Columbine High School and Ortiz’s student assistant, nominated Ortiz for the 9Teachers Who Care Award. “The special needs children require support beyond that of other students at Columbine, and Mr. Ortiz provides this support with a loving and caring attitude which, I believe, helps the students learn and grow,” wrote McKee. “One of the most influential aspects of his teaching style is his ability to show support and have fun with the students while also teaching them how to act respectfully and understand basic etiquette of society.”

According to Frank DeAngelis, the principal at Columbine High School, Ortiz has the ability to motivate his students and has developed innovative strategies to teach them new skills. “It is heartwarming to watch him work with our students. I received a phone call from a parent who was in tears because he was told on numerous occasions that his son would never be able to read. He called to tell me that his son went home and read for his parents,” DeAngelis wrote.

Ortiz is an instrumental part of the Columbine community; he champions two Columbine programs for special needs students as the organizer of the Challenge Program and the head coach for the Unified Basketball program. Ortiz also participates in and supports many of the activities Columbine offers. He developed the Latino Empowerment Achievement Program at Columbine, is the head coach of the girls softball team, helps to coach the girls Powder Puff football team and even signed up to dye his hair pink for a fundraiser.

“Robin spends countless hours working and advocating for all the students,” wrote Pam Moore, a parent of a student who participates in the Challenge Program. “His desire to make each reach their full potential is something that each of the students will remember for a lifetime.”

The “9Teachers Who Care” award was created by 9NEWS and CollegeInvest in 2001 to recognize and profile educators who are making a difference. The program was designed to highlight the positive stories and outcomes that are happening in Colorado classrooms every day.

CollegeInvest is a not-for-profit division of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. Since 1979, CollegeInvest has helped more than half a million families break down the financial barriers to college by providing expert information, simple planning tools, scholarships, 529 college savings plans, and low-cost student and parent loans. For more information, visit www.collegeinvest.org or call 1-888-900-COLLEGE.

Anyone can nominate a teacher for the 9Teachers Who Care award. Nomination forms can be downloaded from the Education Page or the Community Page on www.9news.com or requested by calling 303-871-1899.

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