

Marina Village's Harp earns honor

Educator of the year goes to school counselor

By Laura Newell, Telegraph staff writer - January 26, 2011



Myrna Harp

A local school counselor now finds herself in the spotlight.

Myrna Harp, a school counselor for Marina Village Middle School, was named the educator of the year for the Rescue Union School District for 2010-2011

"I was shocked when I found out because it doesn't happen to counselors," Harp said. "That award has always been teacher of the year, until this year."

Harp, 54, was selected from numerous candidates across the district and is the first counselor to be recognized with this award. She has been at the school for eight years and working as a counselor for 13 years.

"I give students tools to succeed, and when I say tools, it all depends upon what the person needs," Harp said. "Kids at this age (sixth through eighth grade) are going through difficult things and many changes. So, I help the kids see things from a different perspective. I am successful because there is no judgment. I don't give up on anyone."

Jeff Warshaw, Marina Village Middle School principal, said the school staff, parents and students are excited for Harp.

"This is so well deserved," Warshaw said. "She contributes so much to our school, students and community."

He said Harp works with students in a variety of different capacities.

"She has built a wonderful counseling program here and the support that she has provided is hard to put into words," Warshaw said. "She provides a safe and supportive place for kids to turn to while navigating through the challenges of middle school. Middle school can be a tough time for kids, so to have her here is a gift."

Harp was born and raised in Placerville, and now lives in Diamond Springs.

"I chose to become a school counselor because school was so horrible for me," she said. "This is my second career. I went back to college when I was 32 and got my (master's) degree in counseling and my (bachelor's) in psychology."

She said she has an 87 percent success rate yearly when students go through her program including behavioral, academic or attendance.

She said there are 795 kids on campus, and throughout the year she will meet with two-thirds of them in her office. On a daily basis, she said she will see 20 to 70 students on average. She also visits every classroom throughout the year.

"It's rewarding and it's also very gut wrenching, so it can get difficult," she said. "But the biggest reward is when I work with a struggling student who comes back to tell me how well they are doing later in life. It's a good feeling because you know that you are affecting society as a whole."