

Superior Court of California County of Santa Clara

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Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara Celebrates Civic Learning Award at Ida Jew Academy and Valle Vista Elementary

SAN JOSÉ, California (September 24, 2024): The Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, proudly congratulates Ida Jew Academy and Valle Vista Elementary (IJAVVE) on receiving the prestigious Civic Learning Award of Distinction. This award highlights the school's outstanding commitment to civic engagement and fostering leadership skills among students.

The award ceremony, held at IJAVVE, showcased the dedication of students, faculty, and staff to promoting civic learning as an integral part of the school's curriculum. Hon. Evette Pennypacker, a key supporter of the California Courts' Civic Learning Initiative, was in attendance to deliver an insightful lesson to the school's fifth-grade students about the Constitution and government. Judge Pennypacker also presented the Civic Learning Award, commending the school for its exemplary efforts in cultivating the next generation of informed and engaged citizens.

During the ceremony, Dr. Anthony Alvarado, principal at IJAVVE, delivered a powerful speech emphasizing the importance of civic education. "At IJAVVE, civics is a core part of everything we do," said Dr. Alvarado. "Our students actively participate in discussions on justice, equity, and democracy, applying what they learn in the classroom to real-world situations within their community. This award is a testament to our commitment to shaping informed and responsible citizens of tomorrow."

Following Dr. Alvarado's remarks, Ms. Friend, a faculty member, spoke about the collaborative efforts of the school community in building an inclusive and vibrant school culture. "Our student leadership has been pivotal in organizing activities that not only foster school spirit but also promote lasting connections and inclusivity," said Ms. Friend.

Kassandra, the Student Body President, and Sabirah, Vice President, also took the stage to share their thoughts on civic learning. "This recognition is about more than academics," said Kassandra. "It's about using our voices and actions to serve our community and create positive change." Sabirah added, "We want to thank our teachers and mentors for guiding us, and we are committed to continuing to advocate for equality, climate action, and community service."

The event also featured a presentation of IJAVVE's student leadership initiatives, including their Weekly Morning Announcements, Buddy Classes, Lower-Grade Games, and the Ruby Bridges Day event. These programs emphasize the school's commitment to fostering civic engagement at every grade level, encouraging students to take ownership of their community and school culture.

"This award reflects the hard work of our entire school community," said Ms. Friend. "I am incredibly proud of what we have built together and excited to see how our students continue to grow as thoughtful and active members of society."

The Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, is proud to support the civic learning efforts of schools like IJAVVE and looks forward to continued partnerships that promote civic responsibility and leadership among youth.

For more information about the Civic Learning Initiative and how to get involved, the Judicial Council of California's website: <https://www.powerofdemocracy.org/>.

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Figure 1- Judge Pennypacker guiding students through a presentation on the U.S. Constitution.



Figure 2- Judge Pennypacker answering questions from an engaged audience.



Figure 3- Constitution Month allows students to engage with history from their perspective, offering the opportunity for dialogue with a judicial officer.



Figure 4- IIAVVE Student Body Leadership photographed with Hon. Evette Pennypacker.



Figure 5- Student Body President and Vice President with their advisor, Ms. Friend, and school principal, Dr. Alvarado.



Figure 6- Student Body Leadership accepting the Civic Learning Award along with Members of IJAVVE and the Mt. Pleasant Elementary School District.