



**Date:** May 4, 2015

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Early Childhood Educator wins Tall Tree Award for Outstanding Professional**

Sharon Keplinger, PreK Principal for the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) was awarded the Chamber of Commerce's Tall Tree Award for "Outstanding Professional". Sharon leads the PreSchool Family program and has been instrumental in the growth of the district's early childhood offerings. She expanded Greendell's offerings to include an additional class of the Young Fives Program, Springboard to Kindergarten, Transitional Kindergarten and the inclusion on site of all preschool special education programs. After 20 years in leadership, Sharon will be retiring from PAUSD at the end of this school year.

The PreSchool Family (PSF) program began in 1946 and is part of the Palo Alto Adult School. Under Sharon's direction, two new endeavors were started this school year. An early Childhood Development class at Palo Alto High School now includes an opportunity for students to come to PSF to do their practicum work. With one lecture class period a week at Paly and then two PSF visits a week, students gain practical experience working with infant, toddler, and preschool children. Students learn basic principles of child growth and development, participate in the implementation of early childhood curriculum, and plan and implement their own developmentally appropriate curriculum. Upon completion of the course, high school students are able to use their knowledge of differences in development and approaches to learning, and provide opportunities that support young children's physical, social, emotional, language, and cognitive development. A second new program is a PSF dinner class that was introduced for working families. Working parents are now able to benefit and learn from parenting discussions and play among staff, parents and their preschool children.

Parent education offered by the Palo Alto Adult School continues beyond early education. Other parenting course offerings include ESL for parents, Dreamcatchers tutoring offered in partnership with Stanford students and Parent Project. Palo Alto Adult School Principal Katya Villalobos states, "The Adult School is a great resource for our entire community and we live by our motto - Education is for life".

For additional information on Palo Alto Adult School, contact Principal Katya Villalobos at 650-329-3752 or by email at [kvillalobos@pausd.org](mailto:kvillalobos@pausd.org).

### **About Palo Alto Adult School**

Palo Alto Adult School (PAAS) was established by the Palo Alto Unified School District in 1921. PAAS is committed to excellence in providing a broad range of educational programs that meet the diverse lifelong learning needs of our community. The Adult School's goals are to support a skilled workforce, successful schools and a vibrant community by providing programs in English as a Second Language (ESL), Career Technical Education, Parent Education, Education for Independent Living and Community Education. Palo Alto Adult School is self-supporting and annually serves a student population of more than 8000 students. For additional information, call 650-329-3752 or visit the PAAS web site at [www.paadultschool.org](http://www.paadultschool.org).