

## **NEW Honors Janice Vargas, Harvest Elementary School Principal**

Submitted by Yolanda McHodgkins, Public School Representative

[Note from Yolanda: I have known Janice Vargas since she was born. Her grandparents and parents attended Iglesia del Nazareno, our church in Pasadena. She grew up in the church, attending Sunday School classes, going to district church camps, participating in Christmas programs and Children's Bible Quizzing. She graduated from Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU) and married Pablo Vargas, a young man who also attended our church and graduated from PLNU. Janice has a Master of Educational Administration from PLNU.

They have four children, ages 9 to 15. Janice's mother, Ansa Luisa Bell is a pastor at the Delano Church of the Nazarene. Janice and I taught kindergarten together at the Jefferson Elementary School in Pasadena. She taught other classes in Pasadena, Bakersfield, and Delano. She is a wonderful young lady and worthy of being honored by her school district and Nazarene Educators Worldwide.]

### **New Harvest School Principal Strives to Serve the Community**

By Mike Bledsoe, Director of Child Development Services, Delano Union School District

(This article by Mike Bledsoe appeared in the September 7, 2019 edition of the Delano Now! Online news.)

Beginning in her first year of teaching, Janice Vargas wanted to become a school administrator. She has taken the next step in her administrative career by being named Principal of Delano Union School District's Harvest Elementary School.

"I am thankful and blessed to be here," Vargas said. "I am being challenged with things I have not done before."

Her university education occurred at Point Loma Nazarene University, including her undergrad coursework through her Master of Arts in Educational Administration.

Vargas began her educational career as a kindergarten teacher in the Pasadena Unified School District, where she also served as an English language development resource teacher.

Vargas then transitioned to teaching Grade 6 in the Los Angeles Unified School District. She assisted with the group Students Running the LA Marathon, which helped students train for the annual marathon. She proudly stated that 40 of the students in the group competed in the 26.2-mile race. Starting during her time in Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley, the quest for fitness and wellness has continued throughout her career.

Vargas came to Delano Union School District as a Grade 1 teacher at Nueva Vista Language Academy. She was also involved in the academy's dual-immersion program.

Her first administrative position was vice principal at Fremont Elementary School. A major accomplishment during her year at the school was the application and receipt by the school of a

\$35,000 fitness grant, which relates to Kern Health Systems School Wellness Grant program. The grant allowed for the development of a 100-mile club for students and parents, installation of electric water dispensers, nutrition classes for students and parents, and sustainable gardens that are maintained by the school's different grade levels. The grant was renewed for a second year in 2018-19.

Vargas was then named vice principal of Terrace Elementary School in 2018-19, working with Principal Alvin D. Hennessee. She was also successful in procuring a \$35,000 grant from Kern Health Systems for Terrace, which will allow the school to develop sustainable gardens and provide a rock-climbing wall in its new fitness room.

During her time so far as a Harvest Bear, Vargas finds it to be a wonderful school. Staff, students and parents embrace Kindness Matters. She is excited to be there to serve "our kids."

"Our teachers give 110% every day," the Harvest principal said. "I want to support them in any way I can."

Vargas states that she works in a fantastic school district. Decisions and instruction are student oriented. Teachers and administrators look at the whole child and assist learning through building social and emotional goals in students.

"The district is very proactive in programs and safety," she said. "We are ahead of many other districts in academics and attendance."

The Harvest principal foresees great things in the district during the next two years. She notes all the supports that are given to new teachers.

"There is great positive energy and momentum," Vargas said. "There is also an emphasis from the district of coaching support for all teachers."

Vargas and her husband, Pablo, have four children who are either attending, or have graduated, from Delano Union School District schools. Oldest son Ethan is a sophomore at Cesar Chavez High School, where he has a strong interest in basketball. Daughter Sara (who graduated as one of the top 10 students at Pioneer School this spring) is also interested in basketball as a freshman at CCHS. Son Isaiah is a Grade 6 student at La Viña Middle School, while youngest son Joshua is a Harvest Bear Grade 3 student.

Community support through the schools and her church are important to Vargas. She believes in creating good role models for all students.

"I love serving the community," she said. "Our students thrive to learn. If we teach them well, they will come back to the community and give."

**Mike Bledsoe** is the Director of Child Development Services for the Delano Union School District. This article written by him appeared in the Delano Now! online news for September 7, 2019. It is used by permission of Mike Bledsoe and the Delano Now! staff. To see the article, go to <https://www.delanonow.com/articles/new-harvest-elementary-school-principal-janice-vargas-strives-to-serve-the-community/> .

