



**Press Release  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Andy Heinemann, Chief Executive Officer, 520-327-7619

**TUCSON VALUES TEACHERS PRESENTED THE SEPTEMBER TEACHER  
EXCELLENCE AWARD TO KELSEY ESHAM**

TUCSON, Ariz. — Tucson Values Teachers (TVT) presented the September Teacher Excellence Award to Kelsey Esham, a PreKindergarten teacher at Vail Inclusive Preschool (VIP) – Mica Mountain in Vail Unified School District. Esham has taught for 11 years, her past five at VIP teaching in an inclusive classroom. She also serves as the team lead, the Technology Assistant Teacher, and the IEP and cognitive coach for other teachers. In 2020, Esham was named Teacher of the Year for VIP.

After receiving the Teacher Excellence Award, Esham said, “This is what I do for all of my students, day in and day out, to ensure that they are learning and growing to the best person they can be. I want them to leave my class knowing that they were loved and to have a love of learning so that they can thrive when they get into elementary school. Each one of these kids is so special I cannot wait to see the amazing things they do in the future!”

Esham was nominated by Jayme Tornarore. In her nominating statement, Tornarore wrote that both of her twins are in Esham’s class with IEPs and that, “they have made so much growth with her this year so far. They are excited to go to school and learn. My son and daughter had delays and I feared for when they do start kindergarten. But the growth they have made in less than a quarter has me excited for the first time about them starting kindergarten.”

“She truly is an inspirational teacher and is making a difference early on in children's lives,” wrote Tornarore.

Tucson Values Teachers spotlights quality Southern Arizona teachers every month. Teachers are nominated through Tucson Values Teachers’ website by colleagues, students, friends, and other community members. Winners of the Teacher Excellence Award receive \$250 cash courtesy of Helios Education Foundation, a \$100 gift certificate for classroom supplies, and flowers.

More information about the Teacher Excellence Award, including the nomination form, can be found at [www.tucsonvaluesteachers.org](http://www.tucsonvaluesteachers.org).

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*Tucson Values Teachers (TVT) is a business and education partnership focused on helping schools and districts attract, retain and support the very best teachers for every PreK-12 classroom in Southern Arizona. The organization recognizes the critical role teachers play in student achievement and the vital influence they have on Tucson’s future. It does this work by raising public awareness of the value of the teaching profession while providing programs that benefit teachers economically and professionally. For more information and to support TVT, visit [tucsonvaluesteachers.org](http://tucsonvaluesteachers.org) or call (520) 327-7619.*