



# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

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**K. ERIK SWANSON, PhD**  
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**2024-PIO-0143**

**May 7, 2024**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Yoo Kyung Shin, Named the 2025 Guam Teacher of the Year and James Lester Santiago, named People's Choice for 2025 Guam Teacher of the Year**

*Tiyan, Guam* - The Guam Department of Education (GDOE) and the Foundation for Public Education (FPE) proudly announced and congratulated Yoo Kyung "Yooky" Shin as the winner of the 2025 GTOY during a recognition ceremony held at the Government House on Friday, May 3, 2024. Ms. Shin will represent Guam in the 2025 National Teacher of the Year Program.

Yoo Kyung "Yooky" Shin's dedication to music education has significantly impacted the Guam Department of Education and the community. With a rich background in both English and Music, she has been nurturing young talents for nearly two decades. Her leadership as a department chairperson at Simon Sanchez's Fine Arts Department and her initiative in founding La Voce choir are testaments to her commitment and passion. The accolades received by La Voce at the Tumon Bay Music Festival highlight the excellence and high standards she instills in her students. Ms. Shin's journey from teaching Math to leading a gold-award-winning choir is an inspiring story of versatility and dedication to education and the arts.

Ms. Shin's dedication to nurturing the arts is truly inspiring. Her establishment of the La Voce Fine Arts scholarship demonstrates a deep commitment to supporting young talent and the belief in the transformative power of the arts. The scholarship not only provides financial assistance but also encourages students to pursue their passion for fine arts at a higher level. Moreover, her initiative to promote unity through the "Languages of Love" concert reflects the universal language of music and its ability to bring people together. These efforts highlight the importance of arts education in enriching students' lives and fostering a more harmonious society. Ms. Shin's work is a testament to the enduring value of the arts in education and community building.

The recognition of James Lester Santiago with the 2025 Guam Teacher of the Year People's Choice Award is a significant achievement that underscores the vital role educators play in shaping society. This honor, bestowed upon him by the community through a participatory voting process, not only celebrates his dedication and impact on the students of Upi Elementary School but also serves as an inspiration to teachers everywhere. Such awards highlight the collective appreciation for educators who go above and beyond in nurturing the intellectual and emotional growth of their students. Mr. Santiago's commitment to education exemplifies the profound influence a passionate teacher can have on the lives of young learners, and his accolade is a reminder of the respect and support that the community holds for those who dedicate themselves to this noble profession.



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The Guam Department of Education and the Foundation of Public Education extend their heartfelt congratulations to the exceptional educators who have been selected as the 2025 Guam Teacher of the Year (GTOY) finalists. This prestigious recognition highlights the dedication, creativity, and passion that these teachers bring to their classrooms, impacting the lives of students every day. Madrid Borja, Sharon Mae Cabrera, Marie Juvy Carino, James Lester Santiago, and Charina Anne Valencia represent the best of educational excellence, and their commitment to fostering a nurturing and dynamic learning environment is truly commendable. Their influence extends beyond the classroom, inspiring their peers and shaping the future of education in Guam. The community celebrates their achievements and the vital role they play in developing young minds and strengthening the foundation of public education. The GDOE and FPE would like to thank the sponsors of the 2025 GDOE Teacher of the Year and the presenting sponsors: Bank of Guam, Cars Plus, and KUAM Careforce.

The Guam Department of Education successfully hosted the 2025 Guam Teacher of the Year (GTOY) event, which was live-streamed on their Facebook page on May 3, 2024. Despite facing some technical challenges that caused intermittent broadcasting, the GDOE team promptly addressed the issues, ensuring the continuation of the live stream. This event celebrated the dedication and excellence of educators in Guam, highlighting their invaluable contribution to shaping the future of students. The GTOY program stands as a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the education community in the face of unforeseen obstacles.

For more information, email at [guamtoy2025@gdoe.net](mailto:guamtoy2025@gdoe.net), or [mtreyes@gdoe.net](mailto:mtreyes@gdoe.net)

**-END OF STATEMENT-**



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## PHOTO RELEASE:



(L-R) Maria Leon Guerrero, Foundation for Public Education Chairperson, Sharon Mae Cabrera, 2025 GTOY Finalist - Tamuning Elementary School, Charina Anne Valencia 2025 GTOY Finalist - FB Leon Guerrero Middle School, Madrid Borja 2025 GTOY Finalist - LP Untalan Middle School, Yoo Kyung "Yooky" Shin 2025 Guam Teacher of the Year Winner - Simon Sanchez High School, Marie Juvy Carino 2025 GTOY Finalist - LP Untalan Middle School, Charity Catunao Story 2025 GTOY Semi Finalist - Adacao Elementary School, James Lester Santiago, 2025 GTOY Finalist - Upi Elementary School, Joyce Crisostomo Executive Director Carsplus, Michelle Bordallo, Foundation for Public Education Treasurer



(L-R) Angel Sablan, Guam Education Board (GEB) Vice Chair; Timothy Fedenko, GEB member, Peter Alexis Ada, GEB member; Sharon Mae Cabrera, 2025 GTOY Finalist - Tamuning Elementary School, Charina Anne Valencia 2025 GTOY Finalist - FB Leon Guerrero Middle School, Madrid Borja 2025 GTOY Finalist - LP Untalan Middle School, Yoo Kyung "Yooky" Shin 2025 Guam Teacher of the Year Winner - Simon Sanchez High School, Marie Juvy Carino 2025 GTOY Finalist - LP Untalan Middle School, Charity Catunao Story 2025 GTOY Semi Finalist - Adacao Elementary School, (at the back) James Lester Santiago, 2025 GTOY Finalist - Upi Elementary School, Dr. Mary Okada, GEB Chairperson; Dr. Erik Swanson, GDOE Superintendent.

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