



U.S. News report ranks AAE in top 3 percent

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By Rene De La Cruz
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APPLE VALLEY • The Academy for Academic Excellence was given a Silver Medal Ranking that placed them in the top 3 percent of schools in the nation, according to a recent U.S. News report on America's Best High Schools.

The ranking was based on the results of the 2010 Base Academic Performance Index which was announced last month.

“This is very exciting for our school,” AAE spokesperson Cheryl Thompson said. “The staff and students work very hard and it’s wonderful that our efforts have been validated.”

Out of the 1,787 medals awarded nationally, 172 went to California and three to San Bernardino County schools.

“High academic and personal standards for students and staff” contributed to AAE’s success, said Lewis Center Chief Academic Advisor Gordon Soholt.

“I attribute our success to a partnership model that includes students, parents and staff,” Soholt said. “When all three ‘legs’ of the partnership work well together then students can achieve greatness.”

Factors that determined a school’s national ranking included standardized tests from last year, such as high school exit exams, and STAR testing.

Kelly Bergstrom, whose daughter Ashley, 16, attends AAE, said school founder Rick Piercy was one of the main reasons behind AAE’s high standards and success.

“Piercy has a unique way of prioritizing the kids and knowing what they need to succeed,” Bergstrom said. “The school has great curriculum and teachers, but they also pull in life experiences to get the kids excited about what they are learning.”

Rene Syfrig–Stepanian, whose daughter, Alexis, just completed the fourth grade, said that one of the secrets to AAE’s success is the introduction of various subjects and activities to young students, such as music, ROTC and science.

“During our first year Alexis had a chance to watch the NASA moon project,” Stephanian said. “That just made her that much more interested in school.”

Stephanian said that AAE works hard to build a common bridge from the youngest to the oldest student.

“If every school was modeled after AAE they would do fantastic,” Bergstrom said.

More information can be found online at lewiscenter.org/aae or by calling (760) 946-5414.

Rene De La Cruz may be reached at Rene@AppleValley-Review.com.

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