

March 27, 2014

Señor Marcelo Leal  
Oak Grove High School  
285 Blossom Hill Road  
San Jose, CA 95123

Dear Señor Leal:

**CONGRATULATIONS!** What a delight to learn of your recent accomplishment! I cannot think of a better person to receive the "Outstanding Teacher Leader" award. You are most deserving of the praise.

I recall our first encounter at "Back to School" night when our daughter, Elizabeth, was taking your class. You had just moved across the country and found yourself trying to get your bearings in a new environment. In your life popped a mama bear who would passionately fight for and protect her children . . . that would be me, of course. I was not pleased with how you were determining grades, especially at the elementary level. I observed that Elizabeth was in a classroom with a majority of Spanish speakers. She had no background in the language and was frustrated by how demanding the assignments were. In retrospect, I am sorry for my aggressive attitude towards you. In many ways, we were both navigating new territory.

With a little bit of adjustment and time, everyone settled into a workable rhythm. Here we are with so many wonderful experiences behind us. Thank you for all the sacrifice, dedication, and support you have showered on all your students, but especially my children. Kristina, Elizabeth, Melinda, and Michael are all grateful for any time they spent under your instruction, even if it wasn't appreciated at the time. You were instrumental in Kristina excelling in Spanish, which has made her living in Costa Rica so easy. Talk about fluent!

Not sure if you know, but both Kristina and Elizabeth (Ethiopia) are pregnant again. We will have more international grandbabies to love! Trust you are continuing to enjoy parenthood – such a blessing! Once again, thank you for being such an important part of our children's education. May you continue to pursue a wonderful career path and reap the benefits of your labor and devotion.

With a very thankful heart,

*Karen Bower*

Karen Bower