



## NEWS\*NEWS\*NEWS

### *SANTA MARIA JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT*

#### **PRESS RELEASE**

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August 28, 2018

PVHS Teacher Kevin Ilac has been selected as an exceptional teacher by [www.honored.org](http://www.honored.org) for changing and making an impact on the life of a former student.

Ilac was nominated by Amada Villalobos, an AVID student from the class of 2013, who submitted a 500-word essay to the organization. Villalobos is currently in her last year at New York University finishing her journalism degree.

The recognition comes with a \$5,000 unrestricted cash award and a \$1,000 gift card to [DonorsChoose.org](http://DonorsChoose.org) to support teachers across the county. The story will be published November 1 on the Honored website.

"I am humbled by Honored's decision to choose me as one of their Honorees for 2018," Ilac said. "I am also indebted to the work that Amada Villalobos did to win me this award with her beautiful and poignant words. I hope that my continued work with the students of Pioneer Valley will live up to the high standards that Honored recognizes and that I can inspire students to fulfill their potential through equity and excellence."

Villalobos met him as a sophomore and described him as teacher with an "interesting vibe that was commanding but also comforting" inside and outside the classroom. As their relationship grew, Ilac was there for family, personal and financial struggles – and the second time she applied to NYU - and was accepted.

"He's inspired me to be the best version of yourself regardless of your surroundings," she added. "He was honestly the only person who did not look at me like I was crazy when I said I wanted to go to NYU. I wake up every day thankful to the man that lives across the county and every day I try to make him proud."

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