



COLLEGE
of
the DESERT

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COD nursing professor to receive national award

PALM DESERT, CA — Cindy Tatsumi, an adjunct professor of nursing at College of the Desert, will receive a national award on April 23 for her work in preventing traumatic injuries over more than two decades.

Tatsumi, a 40-year nurse, is the program director/lead instructor in the Certified Nursing Assistant program. She has taught at the college for nine years and now teaches a Health Sciences class that includes training in nursing homes to help students learn more about geriatrics.

She and her husband, neurosurgeon Tetsuo Tatsumi, will receive the Dr. David and Donna Cavanaugh Distinguished Service Award from the Naperville, Ill.-based ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation.

The Indio couple have long been involved in ThinkFirst and launched the chapter in Vail, Colo. The two were avid skiers who noticed the ski instructors at their resort weren't wearing helmets despite witnessing firsthand on a daily basis the types of injuries skiers without helmets suffered on the slopes, Cindy said. Tetsuo was able to convince the resort CEO to institute a mandatory helmet rule for the instructors and employees to set a better example for skiers at the resort.

The 35-year couple has also worked with Bell Helmets to donate helmets for children and Cindy has been involved in helping parents properly install their child car seats. Tetsuo was also instrumental in launching a pilot program for "return to play" among youth football players after having a concussion while the couple lived in Vail. He also helped develop international ThinkFirst chapters in Honduras and Africa as a chair of the International Committee and the Board of Directors at the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation.

The Tatsumis would love to set up a chapter of ThinkFirst in the desert, Cindy said. It would not only focus on helmet use but also on fall prevention, especially among senior citizens.

The two now live full-time in Sun City Shadow Hills and are really into tennis, spending a lot of time at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden as fans and amateur players. They have three children and three grandchildren.

Tetsuo Tatsumi also received the 2005 Humanitarian Award of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) for his extensive humanitarian efforts in Honduras and Guatemala, where he trained doctors on the latest in neurosurgical

techniques. Cindy Tatsumi also received a Distinguished Faculty Award while teaching at the University of Phoenix.

The ThinkFirst award is well-deserved recognition for the couple, said Carol A. Scobie, director of Nursing and Allied Health at College of the Desert.

“She and her husband have worked for years on a public health campaign to prevent head injuries, through the use of helmets, seat belts, etc., and are being acknowledged for all of their pioneering work,” Scobie said.

ThinkFirst has been around since 1986, focusing on a mission “to prevent brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injuries through education, research and advocacy.” The nonprofit considers traumatic injuries an epidemic.

“Unlike most epidemics, this one is preventable now,” ThinkFirst says on its website. “You don’t have to wait for a cure. Most injuries can be prevented with safe engineering and safe actions.”

ThinkFirst urges people to use their minds to think first and to drive safely, use seatbelts, wear appropriate protective gear while taking part in sports, avoid violence, and not dive into shallow water. The nonprofit provides onsite or online chapter training to hospitals and health-related facilities.

The awards program will take place at the ThinkFirst Conference on Injury Prevention on April 23 at the Doubletree by Hilton in downtown Los Angeles. Learn more at www.ThinkFirst.org.

About College of the Desert:

Established in 1958, College of the Desert (COD), located in Palm Desert, is an accredited community college serving eastern Riverside County, California. The College leads the region in providing quality, higher education, technical training and lifelong learning opportunities, in response to the dynamic needs of our diverse community. The College serves more than 14,000 credit students and 1,000 non-credit students each year and is the number one source of transfer students to California State University, San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus. For more information, visit www.collegeofthedesert.edu.

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