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LEAP Academy University Charter School Educator Named Camden County Teacher of the Year

Sonia Chugh Teaches English as a Second Language at the Camden-based Charter School

Sonia Chugh, an English as a second language (ESL) instructor at LEAP Academy University Charter School in Camden, has been recognized as Camden County Teacher of the Year, one of 21 teachers in New Jersey who were awarded this honor. Chugh, who holds a master's degree in education from the University of Northern Iowa, brings 20 years of experience to her students and creates an environment in her classroom where students of all backgrounds and cultures feel comfortable and ready to learn.

Chugh credits her award as Camden County Teacher of the Year Award to the support she receives from the administration and staff at LEAP Academy, her son and daughter, and most importantly her students who inspire her to be a better teacher every day.

"I am so overjoyed, honored, and privileged to be named Camden County Teacher of the Year," **said Sonia Chugh, ESL educator at LEAP Academy.** "I teach because I have the ability to make a difference in students' lives. My students inspire me every day as they overcome various obstacles with a positive attitude and strong determination. It is rewarding, exciting, and fulfilling to watch them grow and transform into young adults."

Chugh's advocacy for her students and their success has resulted in a 100% graduation rate. The autonomy of charter schools allows her to offer culturally relevant lessons that are reflective of her students. In addition to their studies, Chugh's students participate in programs at Rowan University, the Puerto Rican Art Center Exhibit, theater and STEM clubs and dual college enrollment. Additionally, her students host various workshops that are open to parents, students and the entire Camden County community.

"Charter school teachers are among the most passionate and dedicated educators in New Jersey, and Sonia Chugh encompasses our mission to meet the individual needs of all students we serve," **said Harry Lee, President and CEO of the New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association.** "As an ESL instructor, she has a deep commitment to students from diverse backgrounds, both in and out of the classroom. Her dedication is unparalleled and receiving the title of Camden County Teacher of the Year is a well-deserved honor. We appreciate Governor Murphy's administration for recognizing charter school teachers as talented educators who work tirelessly to help their students achieve."

"At LEAP Academy University Charter School, we pride ourselves in nurturing and educating our students from cradle to college, regardless of background, and Ms. Chugh exemplifies this very goal," **said Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, Founder of LEAP Academy University Charter School.** "On behalf of the entire LEAP community, we thank Ms. Chugh for her unwavering support for our students' success and congratulate her on this prestigious recognition."

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About New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association

The New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association (NJPCSA) is the non-profit membership association that represents the state's charter school community and, by extension, charter school students and their parents. There are currently 87 charter schools in New Jersey serving approximately 57,000 students. We are committed to advancing quality public education for New Jersey's children through the cultivation of excellent public charter schools. The Association seeks to influence legislative and policy environments, leverage collective advocacy, and provide resources to support our members in developing and operating high quality, public charter schools.