



Strength-Based Conversations Flourish at CTA's Good Teaching Conference and IFT's "Teacher Innovation Expo" in San Jose



Professional collaboration and strength-based conversations highlighted the sixth-annual IFT Teacher Innovation Expo on February 7th in downtown San Jose. The Expo was part of the CTA Pre-Good Teaching Conference at the Fairmont Hotel.

Nine teams of outstanding grant recipients presented highlights of their student-centered 2018-19 IFT grant projects and participants were entertained at lunch by the Linden High Show Choir under the direction of Ken Kell.



Scenes from the 2020 Teacher Innovation Expo included (clockwise from above) a presentation of *Aladdin*, with song and dance by students from [Linden High School](#). Their teachers, [Heather Small](#) and [Ken Kell](#), received two IFT grants to help enhance the school's performing arts program.

Among the Expo presenters were San Diego first-grade teacher, [Nancy Lara](#), who spoke about her [Encourage, Embrace, Empower](#) project for 5th-grade girls; [Dennis Gibbs](#), a high school science teacher from Imperial who has, along with his brother [Dan Gibbs](#), teamed with elementary and middle school teachers on their [Imperial Valley Discovery Zone](#) project; and Montgomery Middle School Teacher [Patrick Meehan](#) discussed his school's [Comprehensive Health and Wellness](#) outdoor education and family dinner night programs in San Diego.

High School Special Education teacher [Robill Brannum](#) spoke perceptively about the changing culture at Fontana High and how it has been impacted by his [Zentastic: Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies, Healthy Lives](#) grant project; 4th-grade teachers [Rebecca Cihak](#) (Rocklin) and [Karen Levy](#) (Pacific Grove) passionately spoke about their watershed project, which includes partnerships with parents and community groups; and retired IFT Manager [Dick Gale](#) spoke with teachers [Danny Hauger](#) & [Tavis Beem](#) on their [Inspiring Teachers](#) podcast. To listen, go to YouTube or iTunes.



Creating Strength-Based Opportunities for Connecting to our Planet



The San Diego Think Tank involves collaboration among educators from the San Diego Education Association and the Oceanside Teachers Association. This group of CTA members includes [Julia Bennett](#), [Diana Bentley](#), [Kristina Hohmann](#), [Nancy Lara](#), [Think Tank Facilitator Emalyn Leppard](#), [Patrick Meehan](#), [Michael Rael](#), [Caitlyn Stivaletta](#), and [Ruth Wyatt](#). They invite other San Diego County educators who share their passion to join the group. Interested teachers should please contact IFT at 619-683-3990 or at ift@teacherdrivenchange.org.

“We believe in co-creating universal access to the natural world, to restore balance and harmony through a strength-based, educator driven movement, while building an appreciation for the body, brain, and social-emotional connection to educating the whole child.”

Mission Statement of the San Diego Teacher Think Tank, January 2020



E.A.T. Foundation

Education & Agriculture Together
~ Celebrating Our 30th Year! ~

Educators looking for an opportunity to enlarge their vision and knowledge of the world now have an opportunity to experience farm life for three days. All it takes is enrollment in a summer class sponsored by the Hanford, California-based **E.A.T. Foundation** (www.eatfdn.org).

Now in its 30th year, the “Ag Tour and Seminar” is offered in mid-June and again in mid-July 2020. For a total cost is \$100, teachers will learn from experts about our nation’s food supply, water, soils, bugs, dairy, cattle, and even tractors.

Teachers will have a great learning experience and will receive a \$100 stipend at completion, as well as NGSS resources and STEM lesson plans.



Ripon Unified District TA member, [Lara Wong](#) (left) visits with [Kelly Deming Giacomazzi](#) of the E.A.T. Foundation at the 2020 CTA Good Teaching Conference. Lara was very enthusiastic about her experience after she attended one of the 2019 sessions.



The CTA Institute for Teaching (IFT) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
IFT supports strength-based teacher driven change in school communities across California.
Please contact IFT at 619-683-3990 or at ift@teacherdrivenchange.org