



SAN MATEO COUNTY COUNTY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Date: August 1, 2006

Board Meeting Date: August 15, 2006

Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: John L. Malbie, County Manager
Subject: 2006 Jefferson Award Nominations

Recommendation

Honor the 2006 County of San Mateo nominees for the Jefferson Award for Public Service.

Vision Alignment

Commitment: Leaders work together across boundaries to preserve and enhance our quality of life. **Goal:** Residents accept individual responsibility for contributing to the quality of life in the County as a whole.

2006 Jefferson Award Nominees

The 2006 County of San Mateo Jefferson Awardees:

Patricia Brown, Executive Director, Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center
Elizabeth Gheleta, San Mateo County Service League
Katy Rhoades, former Commissioner, San Mateo County Commission on Disabilities

The three nominees exemplify a selfless commitment to public service. Indeed, each is an unsung hero in San Mateo County. President John F. Kennedy said, "*Peace is a daily, a weekly, a monthly process, gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly building new structures.*" Each day and for many years now, Pat Brown, Elizabeth Gheleta and Katy Rhoades have worked tirelessly to enlighten opinion makers, to render justice and to build bridges among disparate communities. Above and beyond the mandates of their profession, each of the three awardees has worked daily, weekly, monthly, tirelessly opening minds, changing opinions, breaking down institutional barriers, building a more just community. The nominees are courageous members of our community. They are ordinary people, each of whom approach their work with extraordinary passion and commitment that has resulted in the good works that greatly benefit and enhance the quality of life for the people they serve in San Mateo County.

I am proud to present the 2006 County of San Mateo Jefferson Award for Public Service nominees. The nomination forms are attached for your review.

Background

The purpose the Jefferson Award for Public Service is a national program to enhance civic engagement by recognizing extraordinary work done by ordinary people. Established 30 years ago, the Jefferson Award for Public Service is the “noble peace prize” for public service. Simply put, it recognizes unsung community heroes. Jefferson Award winners are ordinary people who do extraordinary works without expectation of recognition or reward. Locally, the 2006 Jefferson Award sponsors include the First National Bank, KPIX Channel 5 and the San Francisco Chronicle. Throughout the year, the media are featuring the San Francisco Bay Area Jefferson Award winners with special segments to highlight the nominee and their good works.

The Jefferson Award program selection criteria and background information materials are attached for your review.

In 2005, your Board recognized five San Mateo County Jefferson Awardees:

Julia Bott, Executive Director of the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Foundation
Sister Christina Heltsley, Executive Director of the St. Francis Center
John Kelly, Samaritan House/San Quentin State Prison Volunteer
Albert Teglia, San Mateo County Adopt-a-Family Program
Larry Whitney, Volunteer Fire Chief, La Honda Fire Brigade

Discussion

Participation in the Jefferson Award program provides an important opportunity for the County of San Mateo to publicly recognize those that share a commitment to excellence in public service. The Jefferson Award spotlights ordinary people found in our community who accomplish extraordinary results. In March, I requested that your Board and County department heads recommend individuals for a 2006 Jefferson Award, asking that consideration be given to the numerous outstanding County employees and volunteers and to the many successful programs and services in the County, which are provided in partnership with community-based organizations, non-profit groups and community volunteers. Throughout the community there are numerous individuals who possess an extraordinary commitment to public service. Indeed, there are many “unsung heroes” in San Mateo County deserving of this distinguished recognition.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact to the County General Fund; however, the three awardees provide priceless contributions to the community.

San Mateo County 2006 Jefferson Award

Nominee Information: Elizabeth Gheleta

Executive Director, Service League of San Mateo County
727 Middlefield Road
Redwood City, CA 94063
(650) 364-4664

Nominator Information:

Peggy Jensen
Director, Child Support Services
San Mateo County
555 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063
(650) 363-4598
pjensen@co.sanmateo.ca.us

Summary Sentence

Elizabeth Gheleta has helped rebuild the lives of thousands of County jail inmates and former inmates, while providing support and assistance to their children and families.

Outstanding Personal Acts

In 1978, Proposition 13 just about closed down the San Mateo County Service League. Funding was uncertain, the Executive Director quit and the landlord had sent an eviction notice. During this difficult time, the League turned to the much-needed leadership of Elizabeth Gheleta, who started as the Office Manager in 1968.

Since 1978, Elizabeth has built the Service League into a well-established, non-profit community organization with 25 staff and over 500 dedicated volunteers. She worked cooperatively with the County Sheriff to expand in-jail services, including educational, religious services, substance abuse counseling, transition and life skills. Today, League employees and volunteers provide over 800 educational, religious and self-improvement programs a year in the men's and women's jails. Elizabeth and her staff also developed four residential facilities for former inmates and started programs to assist the children and families of inmates, especially during the holidays. This past Christmas, the League provided over 400 presents to inmates' children and holiday bags with homemade cookies to over 1,100 inmates.

Elizabeth's vision of improved inmate services has resulted in model programs, which focus on issues of chemical dependency, personal responsibility, education, permanent housing and family life skills. The reality of this vision has truly given hundreds of former inmates and their families a second chance in life.

Community Impact

Elizabeth Gheleta has devoted 38 years to assisting inmates and their families. Her passion and compassion has helped inmates improve their chances for success. Under her direction, the Service League has made San Mateo County a safer place to live by offering inmates the skills and support they need to successfully return to the community.

San Mateo County 2006 Jefferson Award

Nominee Information: Katy Rhoades
183 W. Poplar Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94402
(650) 343-3471
kcrhoades@comcast.net

Nominator Information: San Mateo County Commission on Disabilities
c/o: Craig McCulloh, Staff Liaison
225 37th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403
cmcculloh@co.sanmateo.ca.us

Summary Sentence

Katy Rhoades is one of the most extraordinary volunteers in San Mateo County, devoting her life to improving the quality of life for people with disabilities.

Outstanding Personal Acts

As a volunteer, Katy has devoted thousands of hours always giving 110 percent of herself to every activity she involves herself in, throughout the community. Katy does not sit idly by while others do the work. She is very much a hands-on person with a unique ability to see the big picture of the many organizations that she works with while contributing in many ways, allowing them to reach their goals and objectives and focusing on clients served by the programs. She does not seek out the limelight. She is unassuming, preferring to remain behind the scenes working with others to accomplish whatever is needed. Katy is a tireless and selfless volunteer advocating for those with disabilities.

Community Impact

Over the past 10 years, Katy has had a major impact in our community. As a parent of an adult son with a physical disability, Katy has championed the rights and the accessibility of services for people with disabilities through various volunteer activities including serving on the San Mateo County Commission on Disabilities, the Health Plan of San Mateo, the Meals on Wheels Coalition, New Beginning Coalition and the Second Harvest Food Bank. She also has volunteered for California Children Services and the Far-West Wheelchair Sports Association. Katy also gets involved in so many other community projects, such as renovation projects of schools, libraries and parks. She utilizes her personal experiences in the hope that others will benefit from what she has learned. When she sees a need or a gap in services, she takes action to address those needs. For example, when children with disabilities become of the age where they are transitioning to adulthood, there are not many programs or services that can assist them in making that transition. To address this, Katy developed and coordinated a Transition to Independence Fair for youth with disabilities and their families. San Mateo County is indeed blessed to have Katy Rhoades as a resident who really cares about her community and who makes a difference in the lives of so many people.

San Mateo County 2006 Jefferson Award Nomination

Nominee Information: Patricia Anne Brown

Title: Executive Director, Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center
(1992- present)
Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center
1660 S. Amphlett Blvd., Ste. 219
San Mateo, CA 94402
650-513-0330
pbrown@pcrcweb.org

Nominator Information:

John Maltbie
San Mateo County Manager
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 940603
650.363.4121
mmaltbie@co.sanmateo.ca.us

Summary Sentence: As we live through these unsettled times with daily tension and friction, San Mateo County is blessed to have Pat Brown, a thoughtful peacemaker, working calmly and steadfastly to resolve differences and bridge divides. Pat Brown is truly an unsung hero in our community.

Pat Brown joined the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC) in 1987 as the program administrator for the City of San Mateo and was named Executive Director of PCRC in 1992. The Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center is a non-profit organization that provides conflict management and resolution, as well as communication related services, in San Mateo County. PCRC's mission is to promote positive collaboration and active engagement by residents in the county. Under Pat Brown's leadership, PCRC has grown and today trains people to communicate and solve problems together, facilitates community meetings, builds skills for public participation and, as a neutral third party, assists people in conflict to develop mutually acceptable agreements. PCRC provides community mediation services (mediation, conciliation and facilitation) to assist individuals, neighborhoods, and groups to work through differences and develop mutually acceptable agreements. Because of Pat's vision and commitment, training in conflict resolution, mediation and facilitation are now offered in schools throughout the community. Pat developed an innovative collaborative effort to promote the positive civic engagement for the traditionally under-represented groups within San Mateo County.

In addition to her work at PCRC, as a community volunteer Pat Brown has been involved in the formation and development of a number of partnerships and collaborative efforts in our county. These include: development of the Multi-Option Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program (MAP), a partnership of the courts, the bar association and PCRC. Previously, Pat served on the California Judicial Council's Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee. Pat was also involved in the development of *Thrive*, the San Mateo County alliance of non-profits. She currently serves on the Council of the Peninsula Partnership for Children, Youth and Families. Pat is a founding member of both the California Dispute Resolution Council and its non-profit partner, the California Dispute Resolution Institute.

Most recently, Burlingame, San Bruno and San Mateo police departments all saw a need to help prevent gang violence in the Tongan community. Interfaith and Tongan community leaders, with local law enforcement, approached Pat to help bring the community together to build trust and develop solutions to successfully prevent gang violence. Pat's quiet and competent attention on striving towards community harmony has truly made her one of our treasured and respected unsung heroes.