

PRESS RELEASE

CITY OF UNION CITY

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

OCTOBER 20, 2011

1ST ANNUAL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE COMMUNITY (MADIC) AWARDS

The Union City Human Relations Commission (HRC) is pleased to present its **1st Annual Make A Difference in the Community Awards** at its upcoming regular meeting of October 26, 2011 in the City Council Chambers located in City Hall, 34009 Alvarado-Niles Road, Union City, CA. This new award program recognizes those in the community who, through their volunteer and/or vocational efforts, make a positive difference in the lives of others, thereby making Union City a better place in which to live, work, and play.

Each awardee is nominated by an individual Human Relation Commissioner, and is presented an engraved plaque to commemorate their contributions to our community. Family members, work associates, and community members are invited to attend and express their appreciation for the many contributions of this year's inaugural awardees:

RICHARD VALLE, President and CEO of **Tri-CED Community Recycling**, California's largest non-profit community recycling company. HRC Chair, Jean Harper, nominated Mr. Valle with the following statement "The list of events and organizations that Richard is involved in is pretty much equal to all the events in the city. Richard is a leader in our community who doesn't seek recognition for his many accomplishments. He is a true humanitarian who is always looking to help and improve the quality of life for residents in the community - especially veterans, at-risk youth, unemployed workers, and students. I have nominated Richard because I believe he is the "heart" of Union City."

JUAN GOMEZ, President of the Board of Directors for the **Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center, Inc.**, a community health center founded in Union City, with clinics located in the Decoto neighborhood and on the campus of James Logan High School. TVHC has provided culturally and linguistically appropriate health services for over 40 years to residents in Southern Alameda County, serving over 11,000 residents through more than 52,000 separate visits. Juan is nominated by HRC Vice-Chair, Jonathan Pettey.

CINDIE ALONSO-SIERRA, Cynthia Alonso-Sierra, a Retired Vocational Rehabilitation counselor is being recognized for 20 years of community service and activism in Union City. She has dedicated hundreds of hours at many local community organizations in order to foster empowerment of our youth. She has been an avid activist in New Haven schools from the classroom to Sacramento. While mentoring young Latino women, she has connected them with positive role models, community services and encouraged them to attend college utilizing her counseling background, as well as her command in Spanish and English languages. Recently she mobilized her neighbors to form and participate in a neighborhood watch group, the first such group in her area and served as a neighborhood watch captain. She has been committed to continually inspire average citizens to get involved and make a difference in our city.

Nominating Commissioner Sarabjit Cheema, who grew up in India, says, “I admire the work of Mother Teresa for the poor in India. For the last 15 years, I have witnessed Cindie’s spirit, living by the words of Mother Teresa to be concerned about our next door neighbors and the poor in the society”.

MAKHAN SINGH BAINS, successful local businessman and long-time major donor to Union City community events and organizations. Owner of Raja Sweets Indian Cuisine, one of the largest Indo-American restaurant and catering companies in the Bay Area, Mr. Bains has served on the Board of Directors of the Union City 50th Anniversary Committee and donated generously to the UC50 and many other Union City causes. Makhan is nominated by HRC Commissioner Harpreet Kaur.

MARVIN BOWERMAN, staff counselor at the Fremont Family Resource Center, the Administrative Director of La Honda Music Camp, and Cub Scout Den Leader and Unit Commissioner of Cub Scout Pack 268 in Union City. Mr. Bowerman has also participated in the City’s Youth Violence Prevention and Intervention Advisory Board process. Marvin is nominated by HRC Commissioner, Helen Hsu.

JIM SOLTAU, long-time Youth Minister at St Anne’s Catholic Church, located in Union City. Under Mr. Soltau’s leadership, the Youth Ministry at St. Anne’s has grown and developed into one of the largest youth ministries in the East Bay, serving scores of young people and providing a positive role model for our youth. Jim is nominated by HRC Commissioner, Jerico Abanico.

CHRIS VALUCKAS, Recreation Supervisor for Union City Leisure Services and manager of the Kennedy Community Center located in the Decoto neighborhood of Union City. Mr. Valuckas has had many accomplishments in his career spanning over 14 years with the City, but is being recognized for his exemplary role in building and maintaining Union City’s Special Needs Program that gives residents with physical and mental challenges an opportunity to participate in sports and social events that are inclusive, sensitive, and just plain fun. Chris is nominated by HRC Commissioner, Carmen Smeester.

The public is invited to join the Human Relations Commission in recognizing these individuals who **Make a Difference in our Community**, at 7pm on Wednesday, October 26th, 2001 in the Council Chambers in City Hall, 34009 Alvarado-Nile Road, Union City. Light refreshments will be served after the award ceremony.

For more information, please contact Tony Acosta, Secretary to the Human Relations Commission, at 510.675.5394 or at Tonya@unioncity.org .

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