

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2009**

## **SENIOR AWARDS PROGRAM**

**The Senior Awards program of Contra Costa County was started in 2008 by Chia Chia Chen of Alamo, founder of the Culture to Culture Foundation, to recognize seniors' contributions to organizations in Contra Costa County and to promote volunteerism. Through the kindness of generous donors, the foundation does many community related activities to foster programs for seniors and minorities.**

### **SUPER SENIOR AWARD**

**SARAH BAGGAROZZA age 103**

**nominated by: Brenda Perry**

**Sarah has been a faithful volunteer at the Antioch Senior Center for more than 11 years. In the beginning, Sarah and her sister Henrietta greeted new members. Many of our current members are here due to the cordial and warm welcome they received from the duo. Sarah's sister became very ill, requiring full time care. Sarah visited her every day in the hospital after leaving the Senior Center.**

**EVERYDAY - Sarah now wraps silverware for our Nutrition Program.**

**Rain, wind, sleet or snow does not keep Sarah away. Sarah is serious about her volunteer responsibilities faithfully arriving daily on our Senior Bus. She begins her work immediately.**

**At any age, Sarah is an asset to our Senior Center, but at 103 she is an inspiration to us all.**

## **SENIOR AWARD – FINALIST 2009**

**JOHN GARDELLA**

nominated by: Carol Louisell

**What makes John so remarkable is that he was not supposed to survive his stroke. He spent 3 months at John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek and had to quit working. The good news is this life altering experience led him to become a full time volunteer.**

**John is a very down-to-earth, approachable human being and he is so well suited to volunteering for Caring Hands. He began volunteering in 2007 and has accumulated 205 hours. He keeps the Rehab Department organized and clean, prepares treatment rooms by changing bed linens, responds to special requests from patients and is dedicated to service.**

**John is appreciated by all at ARF for his willingness to do what needs to be done even if it is the dirty job or the job which is behind the scenes or before business hours. Not only does John's work on the landscaping save ARF money but it helps the organization maintain a beautiful environment at our Walnut Creek facility. He has been volunteering since 2003 and given 681 hours of service. His gift makes a difference.**

**He is the hardest working volunteer at PAWS (Performing Animal Welfare Society). He drives two hours from Walnut Creek to San Andreas to cut pipe and pour concrete for our elephant barn. He's built fences for our tigers in 100 degree heat. He always asks for the "tough jobs" and we have plenty of those at PAWS . He has been volunteering since 2003.**

**"John is a dedicated, kind, compassionate, and ever-energetic volunteer for Caring Hands Volunteer Caregivers Program. For more than 4 years, he drove patients with Parkinsons to their exercise classes twice each week from Walnut Creek to Orinda and back. He has assisted 9 Caring Hands seniors since he first joined us in 2004. He also serves in leadership roles as an Advisory Committee member and is also a member of our Community Action Team representing Walnut Creek. He's been volunteering since 2004, and has given 986.25 hours of service.**

## **SENIOR AWARD – FINALIST 2009**

**EILEEN KEMPKER**

**nominated by: Ann Wullschleger**

**At the Volunteer Center of the East Bay, Eileen Kempker astonishes us with her superb organizational and networking abilities. During the last 12 months, Eileen volunteered over 580 hours. Eileen works at five nonprofits: Hospice of the East Bay, Senior Helpline Services, Senior Outreach Services CC Café, Walnut Creek Senior Center and the Volunteer Center of the East Bay.**

**Eileen works once a week in charge of the front desk at the Volunteer Center. She's helped countless people looking for community service and volunteer opportunities to fit their interests and schedule. Additionally, Eileen recruited her own network of volunteers that help out with special needs. Eileen and her team handle the Volunteer Center's donor and newsletter mailings. Eileen took on the job to plan and execute the RSVP annual recognition luncheon for 200 attendees.**

**Eileen's compassion for fellow seniors is evident. At Senior Helpline Services, she provides rides and also makes reassurance calls to homebound seniors. Her love for others is genuine. As a volunteer driver, you feel she will do anything for you and even makes the ride to the doctor's office fun. She lives to serve others. It's no wonder she makes friends everywhere.**

**At the Senior Outreach Services' CC Café, Eileen has served over 500 meals. Eileen and her network rode to the rescue recently when appetizers were needed for 300 people. Using her organizational skills, she split up the work among her group and had everything lined up within 2 days. Another example of the skills and talents.**

**Eileen also personally mentors disabled seniors. She has driven new volunteers to the Senior Center, oriented them and made them feel comfortable until they are able to be their own. Eileen's ability and generosity in the goodwill she brings is amazing - a true volunteer ambassador. Eileen is truly a treasure to our community.**

## **SENIOR AWARD – FINALIST 2009**

**Paul Mikolaj**

**nominated by: Mike Cunningham**

**Paul Mikolaj has been a volunteer with the AARP Tax-Aide Program in Contra Costa County since January, 1999. AARP Tax-Aide is the largest, free, volunteer-run tax counseling and preparation service in the nation. The Tax-Aide program helps taxpayers with limited and moderate income, with special attention to those ages 60 and older.**

**Paul first volunteered as a tax counselor preparing paper tax returns. The following season Paul took on a major leadership role as Technology Coordinator. He is responsible for all technology in the District, and works to implement, maintain, and evaluate systems for tax preparation, administrative procedures, and volunteer training.**

**This opportunity combined his love for technology and his joy of volunteering. To prepare approximately 8,000 federal and state tax returns each year, there is a lot of equipment to be maintained even when resources are limited. Paul's job is to keep CCC up and running smoothly, so the tax counselors and other volunteers can help our clients.**

**A breakdown at a Tax-Aide site is a huge problem – especially when printers don't work. It's Paul's constant vigilance and superb coordination with other leaders and site coordinators that keeps this whole program up and running.**

**When "tax season" ends, many volunteer counselors hibernate until the following January when the next tax season starts. But not Paul - for him, the next tax season begins as soon as the current one ends. It's an all-year commitment for him. It means refurbishing with very little money. Paul searches endlessly for sales of good equipment at bargain prices. He is constantly researching how to improve performance on older systems. His achievements in technology innovation is acknowledged and appreciated by his AARP Tax-Aide peers.**

## **SENIOR AWARD – FINALIST 2009**

**Annie Stephens 70**

**nominated by: Mark Celio**

**Annie volunteers in many areas and is a real asset to all of Contra Costa County. Her main volunteer activities are the Senior Peer Counseling Program, the Elder Support Program, Youth/Senior Program, the Wisdom Circle Founder and Leader at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center.**

**Annie has been part of the Senior Peer Counseling Program for four years and has found it very rewarding. It is the Health Services program that sends volunteers to counsel seniors over 55 in the county who are facing challenges.**

**The Elder Court Support Program is a new program that was created by the Senior Peer Counseling Program. It gives support for the seniors who are dealing with the stress of going to court and dealing with senior abuse or other issues. Annie volunteers at the Martinez Court every Tuesday morning. Annie says she enjoys this program because she understands how emotional it can be. Being able to be there as a support for seniors is something Annie does well.**

**The Youth/Senior Program is a mentoring program that matches a senior and a young person. Annie's role is to facilitate the mentoring sessions and support the pair. The activities empower the youth and re-engage the senior. Annie enjoys watching the pair share knowledge, and get a new appreciation for each other's generation.**

**Annie started the Wisdom Circle three years ago and continues to lead it weekly at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center. The group is a place to make friends, have intellectual stimulation and emotional support. Annie says, "I am touched by the strength and wisdom of these people who are adapting to their changing bodies, abilities and memories." And in her free time, Annie teaches Pinochle to seniors to keep their brains sharp and active.**

**Special thanks to our DONORS:**

**Lori Bastion & Kevin Young -Kensington Vintage Senior Living**

**Edith Chiang**

**Dee Dee and Danny Li-Kah – Harvest Food Products Co., Inc.**

**Lori Murphy - Bank of the West, Dublin branch**

**Walter Ng – Mortgage Fund**

**Joann Sun – Farmers Insurance**

**C.C. Yin – McDonald's, Founder of APAPA**

**Susan Yoshizak, Pleasant Hill Senior Center**

**We are grateful to our JUDGES for their time and their wisdom:**

**Coordinator: Linda Stolow, Senior Advocate, Danville**

**Barbara Smith – Contra Costa for Every Generation**

**John Cottrell, CCC Aging and Adult Services**

**Mei Sun Li, Lafayette Senior Center**

**Kendra Luke, Pleasant Hill Senior Center**

**Alternate judge: Dolores Ciardelli – Danville Weekly**

**We appreciate the talents of Sandi Hunt (singer), the Chinese American Senior Center (dancers), and Gayle Johnson (layout/printing).**



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