



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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Riverside Heroes Awards Recognize Residents Making a Difference

Event this Thursday Honors Nine Whose Actions Have Improved Community

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Nine Riverside residents who have made significant contributions to the Riverside community will be honored by the city's Human Relations Commission at an awards ceremony Thursday, Nov. 14.

The 2013 Riverside Heroes Awards event is scheduled for 6 p.m. on the Grier Pavilion at City Hall, 3900 Main Street. In addition to recognizing this year's Heroes, the event will feature a keynote address from Carlos Cortes, Professor Emeritus of History at UC Riverside.

"The Riverside Heroes Award recognizes people across the city whose efforts make Riverside a better place in which to live," Riverside Mayor Rusty Bailey said. "I applaud each and every person being honored this week and I thank the Human Relations Commission for hosting this important event."

This year's honorees include:

- Diana Ayala – Diana and her sister, Lorinda, teach students Mexican culture through dance and also the history of the community via Grupo Folklorico Maya. Students and parents do not have to pay for lessons or costumes, but the parents are encouraged to volunteer time at rehearsals and performances. The group performed most recently at both the groundbreaking and the unveiling of the Cesar Chavez Memorial in downtown Riverside.
- Katherine Contreras -- Katherine has committed more than 250 hours to The Pink Ribbon Place since 2010 and facilitates their Support Group meetings, inspiring women from all works of life while also fighting her own battle against Stage IV Metastatic/Advanced Breast Cancer for the past nine years. She focuses much of her time on peer-to-peer counseling with other patients and survivors of breast cancer, serving as an inspiration to all.
- Jim Ferguson – Jim is president of the Riverside Museum Associates of the Riverside Metropolitan Museum, presiding over the Executive Board and providing leadership for all the volunteers who support the Museum. His many activities include setting up and taking charge of the DVD projection and sound system at the Museum's Multicultural Council at the Day of

Inclusion. He regularly appears as Father Christmas at Heritage House's Victorian Christmas Event, helped set up the Ice Cream Social and the Moon Festival, restarted the Museum's Ways and Means Committee and represented the Museum during Give Big Riverside.

- George Flower – George is completing his 19th year as president (for life) of the non-profit Friends of Mt. Rubidoux. He chairs membership meetings and coordinates mailings to more than 400 members, has sold Friends of Mt. Rubidoux merchandise, co-taught Mt. Rubidoux classes and led tours for local third-graders, scouts working on a Mt. Rubidoux patch, and adult groups such as the Mission Inn docents. In 2013, the organization was a major partner in the Totally Mt. Rubidoux campaign to preserve the park's historic cross.
- Richard “Rick” Madott – Rick has been a greeter for Kaiser Permanente in Riverside for the past year and has made a huge impact there. He is personable and goes above and beyond to direct members and visitors to their destinations. The volunteer office at the Medical Center has received several letters and phone calls telling of Rick’s excellent service and friendly attitude. Rick was recently named Mr. Congeniality at the Medical Center’s annual staff awards event.
- Lorinda Maya – Lorinda started folklorico dancing at the age of five and continued to dance throughout her school and college years. Later in life, she began dancing again in a professional group. Spurred by interest from her then-four- year old daughter, Lorinda and sister Diana created Grupo Folklorico Maya, which teaches children the art of folklorico dance, free of charge. In 2011, the group placed 2nd in the USA National Folklorico Competition.
- Sherri Power - Sherri has had six children matriculate through the Riverside Unified School District and has been involved as a volunteer since the first child began to attend kindergarten. She continues to volunteer at Frank Augustus Miller Middle School even though she no longer has children there. She arranges luncheons for staff at the school, attends district meetings, is the PTSA president for the school, works with outside agencies such as “Safe Routes to School” to promote student safety, and sits on the RUSD Council PTA Board.
- Pat Silvestri – One of the original members of the Wood Streets Green Team Board of Directors, Pat has been at the heart of the Riverside Community Garden movement for the past four years. He emphasizes the “community” in community gardening, focusing on the educational, social and moral aspects of creating, through voluntary efforts, a communal space that is dedicated to the health, wellness and strength of surrounding residents. He was integral to the creation of the Riverside City College Community Garden and the Tequesquite Community Garden.
- Linda Salinas Thompson – Linda, a community advocate for more than 18 years, has worked to promote and celebrate Latino culture and traditions, including as founder and president of the Riverside County Mexican American Historical Society (RCMAHS). She now is organizing the Celebration of the 90th Birthday of Ysmael Villegas, scheduled to be held at Riverside National Cemetery on March 15, 2014.