



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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## **A DOZEN “STARS” HONORED FOR FIGHT AGAINST CHILD ABUSE** *San Diego County Commission on Children, Youth and Families Annual STARS Awards Presented*

The County of San Diego Commission on Children, Youth and Families honored 12 individuals as STARS of our community at the Child Abuse Prevention Month STARS Awards on Wednesday, April 7. Award recipients included three members of the San Diego Police Department, a dentist that helped acquire funding for two dental vans to serve kindergartners and several advocates for domestic violence victims and foster youth.

The theme of this year’s STARS awards is *Safe Children and Healthy Families are a Shared Responsibility*.

“Every one of the individuals honored has worked tirelessly to make our County a safer place for children to grow and prosper,” said Greg Cox, District 1, County of San Diego Board of Supervisors, who presented a proclamation declaring April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. “They are all truly deserving of their recognition as one of the STARS of our communities.”

“In San Diego County, there are nearly 70,000 calls to the child abuse hotline each year,” said Nick Macchione, Director of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. “We all have a role in ensuring the safety of our children and working to strengthen our families. Even one single child living in an abusive environment is one child too many.”

The 12 individuals honored as community STARS: Amy Taylor, Vice-President, Union Bank; The Osuna Family, for their work with a project involving former foster youth; Jennifer Mendel, foster care and homeless liaison for Grossmont Union High School District; Judge Browder Willis, presiding judge of the Truancy Court in Meadow Lark and South Bay; Kimberly Weisz, child advocate; Dr. Lester Machado, oral surgeon; Dr. Dawn Griffin, president of the Domestic Violence Council; Roseann Myers, child advocate; Ryan Messel, Family and Youth Roundtable; Captain Tony McElroy, San Diego Police Department; Captain Lawrence McKinney, San Diego Police Department; and Detective Pam Lawson, San Diego Police Department.

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