



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY CELEBRATES LOCAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS *Individuals and Organizations Recognized for Extraordinary Achievements in Public Health*

Creating a healthy life skills class for high school students. Developing a free clinic run by university students for homeless and low-income residents. Teaching older adults the benefits of practicing yoga.

These are a few of the achievements by 10 area organizations, individuals and government agencies that will be honored by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) at its seventh annual Public Health Champion Awards ceremony on Friday, April 4. The ceremony took place at the County Administration Center, San Diego.

"These awards shine the spotlight on the valuable partnerships we have achieved with local government, business and the community," said Director Jean Shepard. "Their extraordinary achievements advance the cause of public health while protecting and promoting the health of the public."

The awards also reflect achievements related to the 2008 National Public Health Week theme, *Climate Change: Our Health in the Balance*.

2008 Public Health Champion Award winners include: Theme Award: San Diego Foundation, for its *Climate Change Initiative*; Individual Award: Ellen Beck, M.D., UCSD Division of Family Medicine, co-founder/director of the UCSD Student-Run Free Clinic; Organization Award: 2-1-1, run by INFO Line of San Diego County; and Aging and Independence Services Award: Silver Age Yoga Community Outreach, San Diego, for helping teach yoga to older adults.

HHS Region awards include: Central Region - Center for Healthy Communities/Cheri Fidler, for improving the health and well-being of children; East - City of La Mesa, for establishing a Wellness Task Force to support and promote wellness activities in the city; North Central - Crystal Traverse Frasca, teacher, Mission Bay High School, for initiating *Teens on the Move*, the first healthy life skills class at the school; North Coastal - Katherine J. Valdez, City of Vista, for *Weed and Seed*, an innovative, comprehensive multi-agency approach to law enforcement, crime prevention, and community revitalization; North Inland - Arvie Degenfelder, a health and human services advocate for the city of Ramona and rural communities; and South - City of Chula Vista for its support of the County's Healthy Eating, Active Communities Initiative.

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