



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY RECOGNIZES INNOVATIVE LOCAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS *Individuals and Organizations Honored for Extraordinary Achievements in Public Health*

Youth leading the charge to take back a community park from gang activity and restore it to a place for families and physical activities; joining together two County services to provide citizens with a convenient and accessible way to access health care and information in their neighborhoods; and, several programs working with students to educate them about healthy food choices, obesity and diabetes.

These are a few of the achievements by 10 area organizations, individuals and government agencies that were honored by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) at its eighth annual Public Health Champion Awards ceremony on Friday, April 10.

“The County of San Diego is proud to partner with exceptional community groups and members working hand-in-hand to make our communities healthier,” said Dianne Jacob, Chairwoman, County of San Diego Board of Supervisors. “They are the foot soldiers who are in our communities every day working to educate and inform people about health-related risks and new innovations.”

“It is with great honor that our HHS Public Health Services recognizes local government, business and community members who are leading the way toward helping the residents of San Diego County make healthier lifestyle choices and have access to the health care they need,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H, County Public Health Officer.

The awards also reflect achievements related to the 2009 National Public Health Week theme, *Building the Foundation for a Healthy San Diego*, through proper nutrition, education, and preventative care.

2009 Public Health Champion Award winners include: Theme Award: José Aponte, for his dedication to integrating public health and library services; Individual Award: Parvathi Pokala, DDS, for her leadership in the field of children’s dental care; Organization Award: Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center, for the ability to reach community members and provide direct services; and Aging



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and Independence Services Award: Andrea Holmberg, for her contributions to the Senior Resource Centers that serve as focal community hubs for our aging population.

HHS regional awards include: Central Region – Dr. Maria Lourdes F. Reyes, the Project Director for the California Border Healthy Start Program; East – Lemon Grove School District Wellness Committee, for their collaborative, holistic approach to wellness in an educational setting; North Central – Gina Goss, Cadman Elementary School, for implementing *Nutrition to Grow On* toolkit at her school and beyond; North Coastal – Donald Stump, Executive Director of North County Lifeline, Inc., for his leadership in providing over 100,000 contacts and service to over 9,000 clients in North County; North Inland – Nancy Roy, a leader in TODAY (Transforming Obesity and Diabetes Awareness in Youth) in the rural communities of North County; and South – Communities of Excellence (CX3) Chula Vista for their multi-pronged, youth-driven approach to nutrition, physical activity and obesity prevention in community parks.

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