

Alameda County

**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

Excellence in Human Relations Awards

November 6, 2012

**AWARD SUMMARY**



2012 Excellence in Human Relations Award Winners

**(District 1, Supervisor Scott Haggerty)**

**Louis Chicoine**

Louis Chicoine has been with Abode Services since 1992 and has been their Executive Director since 1994. Louis has a Masters Degree in Social Work and a Masters Degree in Theology. Abode Services offers housing programs linked to support services for low-income and homeless families and individuals. Each Abode program integrates these two components to help people establish permanent stability and return to independent lives. Housing options include emergency shelter, rental subsidies, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing. Support services include case management, primary and mental health care, substance recovery services, job counseling and placement, life skills classes, financial literacy training, practical tenancy training, parenting classes and children's programs.

Louis Chicone (cont.)

During his tenure with Adobe Services, Louis Chicone has provided leadership and innovation which has brought Adobe to its outstanding position in the community today. Mr. Chicone's efforts and dedication has touched thousands of lives and continues to this day.

### **Suzanne Shenfil**

Suzanne Shenfil is the Director of the City of Fremont Human Services Department. Under Suzanne's tutelage, the Human Services Department has grown to providing services for the widest range of people of an extremely diverse community. Suzanne oversees approximately 57 full-time equivalent employees and a budget in the neighborhood of \$13 million.

The Human Services Department delivers and supports services by forging long-term community partnerships; engaging with and building the capacity of the community to do its own problem-solving; and leveraging financial and volunteer resources. Its nationally and internationally recognized services support thousands of residents throughout their life course from infants to elders. Its youth services stimulate healthy development lifestyle choices. Services for families help them navigate crisis situations and become economically successful. Services for older adults and their families help them maintain independence and involvement in the community.

During her tenure, among other programs, Suzanne has made this vision a practical matter by her leadership and vision in establishing the Fremont Family Resource Center, a one-stop shop for all human services. It is the place in Fremont where collaboration and community come together to help solve community problems, be they health-oriented, interpersonal-oriented, or where synergy-based problem-solving needs to happen. Added to her contributions, Suzanne helped establish the 'Pathways to Positive Aging' and 'Community Ambassadors' Programs for seniors. A genuine believer in collaboration, Suzanne sits on several committees seeking to improve services throughout Alameda County – working to improve mental health services and programs for the homeless.

Suzanne has maintained her tenacity in making government responsive to the community's needs. She has helped to build and has lived a model of what we look for in government that works.

**(District 2, Supervisor Richard Valle)**

### **Jaime Jaramillo**

Jaime Jaramillo is the Executive Director of Centro de Servicios in Union City. Mr. Jaramillo, a native of Columbia who immigrated to the United States as a young man, is a Vietnam Veteran and recently served on the Alameda County Veteran Affairs Commission.

Jaime Jaramillo (cont.)

Jaime co-founded Centro de Servicios in 1974, joined its board of directors and in 1996, he was hired as its Executive Director. Centro de Servicios is the oldest non-profit social services organization in the Tri-City area. It has assisted more than 800 families and individuals every month since its inception and, with the help of community partnerships and dedicated volunteers, it serves Union City's low-income residents. It is also one of the few agencies in Union City that provides assistance to Spanish-speaking residents.

Services include food distribution, legal aide, immigration and naturalization services, interpretation and translation services, parenting classes, literacy classes, job placement assistance, youth programs, health care assistance, breast cancer support groups and much more. Jaime Jaramillo is the face, the body and the heart of Centro de Servicios. He leads the group and provides services to residents from helping families in need to representing and advocating for them in the legal system. Years of dedication and service to his community make Jaime Jaramillo a special treasure and a worthy recipient of the Excellence in Human Relations Award.

**(District 3, Supervisor Wilma Chan)**

**Nika St. Claire**

Nika St. Claire is awarded the Alameda County Human Relations Commission Excellence in Human Relations Award posthumously. She was Program Director for DreamCatchers Youth Shelter (Alameda Family Services). Ms. St. Claire directed community-based programs for over 30 years. She spent 23 years working in chemical dependency treatment programs where she authored several articles and book chapters. For the last 10 years she served as an advocate and source of support for runaway, homeless and exploited youth. Throughout her career sexual exploitation of women and young girls has been a common issue. She was a founding member of the SEMRISE (now the Sexually Exploited Minor Network) and served as President of their Board of Directors. Until her untimely death in July of 2012, Ms. St. Claire dedicated every day to creating a safe, welcoming and nurturing space for young people in the most desperate of circumstances.

Nika St. Claire advocated for the needs of sexually exploited youth at every level. She tirelessly pushed forward the need to re-classify them as victims rather than criminals and to have them treated accordingly once taken into custody. Most recently, she served a key role in securing funding for DreamCatchers Homeless Youth Shelter and Support Center to expand its services.

Nika St. Claire ensured our runaway, homeless and exploited youth had a safe place to go and never for a moment stopped fighting for our county to provide them with more. She dedicated her entire life to supporting, serving and advocating for our county's most vulnerable youth.

**(District 4, Supervisor Nate Miley)****Marilyn Washington Harris**

Marilyn Washington Harris is the founder and director of the Khadafy Washington Foundation, named and founded after her son, a star athlete at McClymonds High School, was murdered in 2001. Ms. Harris has dedicated her life and career to the service of other Oakland families that have gone through the pain and struggle of immediate loss of a loved one. Ms. Harris has received the MLK Community Service award from the Attitunial Healing Connection, the Community Leadership Award at the Walk to End Poverty and the Jefferson Award by CBS. Despite these awards, Ms. Harris' work goes on often unnoticed and with little financial support.

Ms. Harris has been a champion for those who are disenfranchised and serves the poorest among our communities and those who have been most affected by violence in our communities.

Most of the monies received by the Khadafy Washington Foundation come from the City of Oakland's Measure Y violence prevention funds, the Mayor's Summer Jobs program and private individuals.

**Barbara Quintero**

Barbara Quintero has been a volunteer and employee with Women of the Way for 4 years, most recently as their Director of Operations. She has participated in numerous efforts as a dedicated volunteer, including the Ashland/Cherryland Violence Prevention Working Group, Chairperson of the Drug Free Communities Steering Committee, the RE-Entry Roundtable, the Eden Area Livability Initiative, the Citizens Advisory Committee for Redevelopment in Ashland, and the Alameda County Women's Commission.

Barbara works tirelessly to ensure fair opportunities for re-entry women and their children, knowing from personal experience that everyone deserves and can benefit from another chance. As part of Barbara's rehabilitation, she has committed to making the communities where she lives and works a better place for all.

**(District 5, Supervisor Keith Carson)****boona cheema**

boona cheema has served as the Executive Director of BOSS (Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency) for over 25 years. She is an excellent community leader in working tirelessly to end homelessness in Alameda County.

boona cheema (cont.)

Her organization BOSS is one of the most innovative and successful nonprofits in our county, serving homeless and low-income people who have multiple barriers to healthy, independent living.

She has served as an advisor and offers free consultation to individuals, public and private agencies, and has been an activist on social, political and economic justice issues locally and nationally for 28 years.

In 2010, she was awarded the Woman of the Year for the Alameda County Women's Hall of Fame.

### **Anne Moses**

Dr. Anne Moses is the founder and President of Ignite, which serves young women 14-22 in their own communities, with an emphasis on lower income women. She has over 20 years experience in social justice organizations with a career spanning non-profit, political, policy, and academic sectors, and a focus on women's and girl's issues.

Ms. Moses has served as Chief Operating Officer for Emerge America, Majority Council Director for EMILY's List and Executive Director of GirlSource. She is also adjunct faculty at Mills College in Oakland.

As founder of Ignite, Anne Moses has affected the lives of young women across the Bay Area. She inspires young women-particularly low-income women, and encourages them to become politically engaged, then become civic leaders, and ultimately pursue elective office. She instills confidence in women that they did not have. She is a gem and a guiding light for women across the Bay Area.