

Volunteer Spotlight - December 2010 Volunteer Spirit Awards

The Volunteer Spirit Awards are a yearly opportunity for organizations throughout Sacramento to recognize the accomplishments of outstanding volunteers. On October 29, 2010, staff and volunteers from various programs at Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services (SFBFS) attended the 10th Annual Volunteer Spirit Awards luncheon in the Grand Ballroom in downtown Sacramento. This event, put on by the Volunteer Center of Sacramento, is the largest volunteer recognition ceremony honoring Sacramento area volunteers. Nominees come from a wide range of local agencies, with areas of volunteerism ranging from education, animals, health, family services, hospitals, seniors, counseling and more. SFBFS program managers take this opportunity to recognize their outstanding volunteers by submitting detailed nominations outlining the dedication and accomplishments of volunteers.

This year, SFBFS nominated eight incredible volunteers in various categories. The nominees included Carrie Detwiler for Ray of Light volunteer (Mother-Baby), Cynthia Bows for Volunteer of the Year in Arts and Recreation (Women's Wisdom Art), Ricci Stephenson for Salt of the Earth volunteer (Mother-Baby), Michael Adams for Volunteer of the Year Supporting those Less Fortunate (Adult Education), Jacob McGonigle for Youth volunteer of the Year (Food Assistance), Chris Crumly for Heart of Gold volunteer



(Clothing), Greg Hoyt for Volunteer of the Year Supporting Children and Youth (Computer Clubhouse) and Home Depot for Volunteer Group of the Year for their work at both SFBFS facilities.

SFBFS staff cheered on the nominees at the luncheon and is ecstatic to report three SFBFS won: Cynthia Bows, Greg Hoyt and Michael Adams. Cynthia

Bows has been a part of Women's Wisdom Art since March 2009. An accomplished sculptor, Cynthia recently celebrated her 80th birthday but her energy and passion for ceramics has only increased over the years. She shares this enthusiasm with the women in the program who are learning to sculpt. She inspires creativity in everyone she surrounds. In addition, Cynthia has stepped up to the plate to raise money from friends, family, colleagues and "anyone who will listen" to fund a scholarship for advanced ceramics courses for five low-income women in the Women's Wisdom Art program.

Greg Hoyt has been a volunteer in the Computer Clubhouse program for over four years. Computer Clubhouse Program Manager Charles Cogger was thrilled at the opportunity to recognize Greg's many accomplishments. Over the years, Greg has provided tutoring and mentoring to the youth in the program and vital IT experience to the computer workstations. A retired Intel employee, Greg has contributed over 800 hours of volunteer work with the youth, repairing and reformatting machines, researching software for the program's curriculum, solving IT problems for the families served in the program, donating computer parts and even developing a course where students built 5 PCs from scratch. The Computer Clubhouse would not be the same without Greg's expertise and dedication.

Michael Adams, a volunteer in the Adult Education program at the Saca Community Learning Center, was a student in a paralegal program when he started volunteering several times a week. He assisted the Adult Education clients with literacy tutoring, computer basics, resume writing and job searches. He enjoyed working one-on-one with clients and even found that his knowledge of the legal system was extremely useful to help individuals in various situations. One client was hesitant to start her job search due to a past mistake possibly showing up on a background check. With Michael's help, she was able to navigate the system to find out her previous case has been dismissed and her record was clear. She was thrilled to be able to search for a job without feeling ashamed about her past thanks to Michael's assistance.

"It's such a gift to have this formal opportunity to recognize our volunteers' accomplishments," says Robin Simpson, Volunteer Services Manager. "Everyone enjoys the luncheon and it's a thrill to take back three awards. We are so proud of our nominees."