

## **Petaluma Health Care District Presents Health Hero Award and \$94,500 in Grant Funding to Local Nonprofits**

**PETALUMA, Calif., May 23, 2019** — At its annual Community Partnership Appreciation Breakfast today, [Petaluma Health Care District](#) (PHCD) presented its Health Hero Award to Karla Lounibos, honored two outstanding Healthquest CPR volunteers with the Golden Heart Award, and announced the 11 recipients of its 2019 Community Health Grants. These grants totaled \$94,500, a sum that nearly doubled the amount awarded at 2018's breakfast.

This is the fourth year in which PHCD has held an event and presented awards celebrating individuals and partner organizations that are doing exceptional work to improve the health and well-being of residents in its southern Sonoma County district.

“This year's Health Hero has served thousands of immigrant families and staff over the past decade as a teacher, mentor, colleague and advocate,” said Ramona Faith, PHCD CEO. “As an immigrant parent herself, Karla identifies with the challenges and fears of raising children in a new culture and she strives to empower parents as their child's first and most important teacher. Education and access to services are key social determinants of health, and Karla ensures that some of our most under-resourced families receive the support they need to succeed.”

Added Faith, “Our grant selections were guided by a sharp focus on our health priorities, and we are honored to be able to strengthen programs and initiatives that reflect these priorities. We are thrilled to have nearly doubled our grant funding, and we are grateful for the insightful feedback that people have provided about organizations working to address critical community needs in literacy and education, evidence-based mental health and wellness services, cardiovascular health, healthy food access, and housing.”

More than 100 attendees, including representatives from our state legislators' offices, Petaluma Mayor Teresa Barrett, members of the Petaluma City Council, and Amber King, vice president of advocacy and membership at the Association of California Healthcare Districts, were present at today's event. The Petaluma City Council and Sonoma County Board of Supervisors both underlined the event's importance by naming May, for the fifth consecutive year, as Health Care District Month to recognize the essential role PHCD plays in southern Sonoma County and the importance of promoting programs that contribute to the health and wellness of the community.

“The partnerships in Petaluma are a testament to the vitality and community spirit of southern Sonoma County,” said California State Senator Bill Dodd, D-Napa. “The programs and organizations are highly interconnected and effective. Petaluma Health Care District is a model of this successful approach. The district makes a huge impact and improves the community it serves, whether by providing support during times of crises or in offering consistent and steady support for services, programs and initiatives that keep us all healthy.”

### **2019 Award and Grant Recipients**

#### **Health Hero Award**

*Award recognizes a person who extends remarkable commitment and exemplary service to benefit the health of individuals and the well-being of communities within southern Sonoma County.*

**Recipient: Karla Lounibos**, Parent Educator and Family Mentor, Petaluma Adult School

## **HeartSafe Community Golden Heart Award**

*Award is in recognition of serving as dedicated volunteers advocating for the importance of community-based CPR and AED training.*

**Recipients: Paul Marini and Leslie Hart**

## **Grant Recipients**

*Supplementing the funding that PHCD provides to organizations serving southern Sonoma County throughout the year, a new process, open to all nonprofit organizations addressing the community's greatest health priorities, was created last year. Applications were reviewed by the Grants Review Committee, composed of community residents and PHCD representatives. The following grants were awarded this year.*

### **Buckelew Programs**

**Award:** \$10,000

**Program Supported:** Mental health remains a top health need in south county, and Buckelew's Family Service Coordination (FSC) Program is a crucial resource that connects families to mental health services, providers and support when they need it most. This grant will support personnel expenses, allowing the FSC Team Leader to dedicate more time to directly serve Petaluma residents.

### **Burbank Housing**

**Award:** \$10,000

**Program Supported:** This funding will support Burbank Housing's two afterschool programs, which help to maintain residents' current affordable housing, provide peace of mind for parents, increase access to quality afterschool care and homework support, expose residents to more physical activity and healthy food choices, and increase access to health services. The program supports three PHCD priorities addressing housing, access to healthy food and educational attainment.

### **Committee on the Shelterless (COTS)**

**Award:** \$10,000

**Program Supported:** Operated by COTS, the Mary Isaak Center Emergency Shelter (MIC-ES) is the only shelter of its kind in the PHCD service area, and it is Sonoma County's second-largest adult shelter. The grant will directly fund MIC-ES personnel expenses, allowing the shelter to continue its work throughout the district.

### **Kids Scoop News**

**Award:** \$5,000

**Program Supported:** Kids Scoop News is a free children's newspaper providing appropriate reading materials that students can bring home and share with their families. The funding will sponsor health education content and tips for healthy eating in each monthly edition.

### **Literacyworks**

**Award:** \$10,000

**Program Supported:** Research shows that approximately 80 million Americans have limited health literacy, which puts them at greater risk for poorer access to care and poorer health outcomes. In California, 65% of adults with limited literacy skills avoid going to the doctor because of difficulties in completing paperwork. Also, 94% of physicians believe that low-literate adults experience a lower quality of care. This grant will support the development of new workshops focused on health literacy and access to

health care for low-literacy and low-income adult and student learners at the Petaluma SRJC campus.

**Mentor Me**

**Award:** \$10,000

**Program Supported:** The Mentor Me Advocacy Team (MMAT) is a specialized program of intensive case management aimed at prevention and intervention techniques intended to keep kids caught up in the juvenile justice system connected to school and their community. This new project addresses an underserved need in our community and the program to date has shown great promise to keep kids on track to complete their education and reengage with their peer support structure.

**Petaluma Adult School**

**Award:** \$9,500

**Program Supported:** Addressing the diverse and complex health and development needs of under-resourced children and families, the AVANCE Parent-Child Education Program provides parenting lessons and evaluation, a weekly community resource hour to connect parents to resources, program networking with agencies, and ongoing education and training for providers. The program has a long waiting list, and this grant will allow more families to be served by this sought-after program.

**Petaluma Bounty**

**Award:** \$10,000

**Program Supported:** Providing families with the tools, motivation, and food to make lasting healthy lifestyle changes, this funding supports the A.L.I.V.E. program, a collaboration between Petaluma Bounty and formally-trained nutritionists that provides low-income families with hands-on, farm-based learning, nutrition education, as well as six weekly Bounty Bags from the Petaluma Bounty Farm. Petaluma Bounty is a program of the Petaluma People Services Center (PPSC).

**Redwood Empire Food Bank**

**Award:** \$5,000

**Program Supported:** The Redwood Empire Food Bank (REFB) assistance programs distribute nourishing food and nutrition education targeting the prevention of diet-related conditions, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and type II diabetes. This funding will help expand the reach of REFB in the Petaluma area, reaching more families, seniors, children and others in need of healthy food.

**Seeds of Awareness**

**Award:** \$10,000 — in partnership with Petaluma Education Foundation

**Program Supported:** The Seeds of Awareness mission is to transform schools and communities with mindfulness. This funding, in collaboration with St. Joseph Health's Healthy for Life school-based program, will provide in-depth support to select Petaluma schools to co-create a culture of kindness and emotional wellness through its trauma-informed, social justice-oriented, mindfulness-based training and emotional support program. The Seeds program is backed by years of studies showing the effectiveness of mindfulness to reduce anxiety, improve attention skills, support emotional regulation, and improve overall well-being. PHCD found that the need for addressing student, parent and teacher anxiety and offering parents mental health resources was the top priority of school superintendents in south county when surveyed earlier this year.

**The Salvation Army**

**Award:** \$5,000

**Program Supported:** The Food Box Program provides free food boxes to those in need. The grant will support food pickup and allow a part-time staff person to be dedicated to this program, thereby improving operational efficiency, food tracking and distribution, and an increase in the supply of fresh fruits and vegetables that reach over 250 families each week.

**About Petaluma Health Care District**

The Petaluma Health Care District (PHCD) is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the southern Sonoma County community through leadership, advocacy, support, partnerships and education. Its vision is to foster a healthier community, a thriving hospital and local access to comprehensive health and wellness services. PHCD has served the health and wellness needs of the community for more than 70 years and is a public agency managed by the community for the community. For more information, please visit [www.phcd.org](http://www.phcd.org).

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