



Office of Youth Development

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Youth of the Month Celebration Dinner Recognizes the Contributions and Achievements of Sacramento Youth

Sacramento, California, February 23, 2010—This Wednesday, during its first *Youth of the Month Celebration Dinner*, the City of Sacramento, Office of Youth Development will honor eight extraordinary youth who have made important contributions in their community or achieved goals they once thought were unattainable. The eight youth will be honored this **Wednesday, February 24**, from **6 – 8 p.m.** at **Casa Gardens - 2760 Sutterville Road, Sacramento.**

For the past year, the Office of Youth Development has recognized extraordinary youth contributions and achievements with its *Youth of the Month Award*. In 2009, eight Sacramento youth received the award.

The contributions of these youth are impressive: one collected then delivered shoes to poor communities in the developing world, one created a video to help young girls with self-esteem issues, and another helped rehabilitate abused animals. These are just a few examples of the many contributions made by these youth.

“I commend these eight Youth of the Month Award recipients for the commitment they have demonstrated to their goals, their peers, and their community,” said Mayor Kevin Johnson. “They continue to reaffirm my belief that Sacramento’s youth are one of its most valuable assets.”

“My community has given me so much and I am so appreciative. I want to thank my community by helping other people,” said Huyen Vo, one of eight Youth of the Month Award recipients. “Each person, even young people who have very little, can make a difference in their community.”

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The following Sacramento youth will be honored for their 2009 achievements and contributions during Wednesday's dinner:

Erika Sims - Erika volunteered for many local volunteer organizations, including Girl Scouts of America, American Heart Association, and American Cancer Society Relay for Life. She also created a video to help young girls improve their self-esteem.

Molly Hitchings - Molly created "Sole Patrol", a volunteer organization that collected over 1,500 pairs of shoes and donated them to developing countries.

William "Tim" Berry - Tim gives back to his community, Del Paso Heights, by serving as a dance instructor to neighborhood children and also as assistant coach for Little League Baseball.

Imani Carino - Among other accomplishments, Imani planned and hosted a fundraising event using local artwork to raise money for safe places for youth in Sacramento.

Ian Myles - Ian worked to raise awareness for equality in special education and was also the youngest member to serve on the Committee Addressing Racial Equality.

Maria Farinias - After being involved with gangs and drugs, Maria turned her life around by leaving her circle of friends and switching schools. She began taking college prep classes and volunteered to help prevent youth gang violence.

Noah Dwyer-Voss - Noah volunteers for the Greater Sacramento Shepherd Rescue. He provides foster care for abused, neglected and abandoned dogs.

Huyen "Kiki" Vo - As a burn survivor, Huyen overcame severe physical and emotional obstacles. Despite the tragic loss of both parents, she has persevered, serving as County Youth Commissioner and volunteering with organizations that serve children who are burn survivors.

The Youth of the Month Initiative was created by the Office of Youth Development and sponsored by Nehemiah Corporation, which provided \$200 awards to each award recipient and is sponsoring Wednesday's dinner. Special thanks go to Fox40 Morning News and its advertiser *Good Feet* for featuring award recipients on its morning news program.

Media inquiries about the Youth of the Month Celebration Dinner can be forwarded to Hindolo Brima, Media and Communications Specialist for the Office of Youth Development, at (916) 622-8066.

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