

ACADEMICS & FACULTY

Faculty–community partnerships to receive Rosenfield Prize at UCLA

Letisia Marquez | April 18, 2008

Five partnerships, each involving a UCLA faculty member and a local nonprofit organization, will be honored with the 2008 Ann C. Rosenfield Community Partnership Prize at UCLA on April 22.

The Rosenfield Prize recognizes innovative collaborations between faculty and regional nonprofits aimed at addressing critical issues affecting the community. This year's honorees have focused on issues involving the environment, health care, teen suicide prevention and theater. Each partnership will receive a \$25,000 award.

"The work of our UCLA prize winners is significant, not only for the impact it will have on the individuals and families served by their innovative partnerships, but also because it symbolizes the greatness that can occur when UCLA scholars are engaged in the community," said Franklin D. Gilliam Jr., UCLA associate vice chancellor for community partnerships. "UCLA is proud to be a leader in the national movement toward engaged scholarship."

Hosted by UCLA's Center for Community Partnerships, the Rosenfield Prize ceremony will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. at the UCLA Broad Art Center, at 240 Charles E. Young Dr. North, on the UCLA campus.

The following partnerships are being honored:

Joan Asarnow / Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services

Asarnow, a professor of psychiatry and biobehavioral sciences, and Hathaway-Sycamores, a Pasadena-based agency serving more than 9,000 at-risk youth and families, partnered to help prevent teen suicide. After an agency-wide survey revealed that approximately one in three clients struggled with suicidal thoughts, one in five had deliberately harmed themselves and one in 10 had attempted suicide, Asarnow, along with Hathaway-Sycamores director of evaluation and research Emily McGrath and a team of agency and academic experts, conducted a training program for agency staff on the best methods for intervening with and improve care for youth struggling with suicidal tendencies. Asarnow, whose team independently developed a suicide prevention program, organized a community forum, created a newsletter, and made presentations at local and national meetings, hopes to implement the program (for which they solicited feedback from Hathaway-Sycamores), at Hathaway-Sycamores and other community nonprofit organizations dealing with youth suicide and suicide prevention.

Yoram Cohen / Committee to Bridge the Gap

Cohen, a professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, and the Committee to Bridge the Gap, a nuclear policy organization focused on nuclear safety, waste disposal, proliferation issues and disarmament, joined to help Simi Valley and its surrounding communities deal with environmental issues associated with the Santa Susana Field Laboratory, a site used until 1959 for the development of nuclear reactors and currently owned by

Boeing. The partnership educated the public about the adverse environmental and health impacts associated with the release of chemical contaminants and radionuclides from various operations at the site and conducted a study that found that hazardous chemicals from the site had reached off-site locations. This four-year scientific and community effort contributed to the development and passage of a bill, authored by state Sen. Sheila Kuehl, to ensure the proper cleanup of the site and its designation as a state park when Boeing vacates the area. Cohen's environmental efforts have also included assistance to U.S. Rep. Jane Harman in dealing with DDT contamination in her district and his work with the Water Technology Center, an engineering organization focused on advanced technologies for water production.

Marjorie Kagawa-Singer / Families in Good Health

Kagawa-Singer, a professor of public health, and Families in Good Health, a program at St. Mary's Medical Center in Long Beach, partnered to increase breast cancer awareness among Hmong and other Southeast Asian women in California. A dozen years ago, few Hmong women were aware of the importance of annual breast cancer screenings. Following one woman's death from advanced breast cancer, Kagawa-Singer and Families in Good Health applied for funds from the California Breast Cancer Research Program for their project, which promoted breast cancer screenings for Hmong women in Long Beach, San Diego and Fresno; as a result, screening rates rose from 29 percent — among the lowest of all ethnic groups — to 41 percent. Researchers also found that culturally specific education materials and intervention design were effective for conveying the importance of monitoring and maintaining proper breast health. A second project, "PATH for Women," in the early 2000s, promoted breast and cervical cancer screenings among monolingual Cambodian, Laotian, Vietnamese, Thai, Chamorro, Tongan and Samoan communities in Los Angeles, Orange, San Francisco and Alameda counties.

Jose Luis Valenzuela / Latino Theater Company at the New Los Angeles Theater Center (LATC)

Valenzuela, a professor at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, and the Latino Theater Company at the LATC have joined forces to showcase diverse theater, dance and other performance arts in Los Angeles. Valenzuela, artistic director of both the company and the center, was responsible for resurrecting the downtown theater center — a complex that had been shuttered for years and was under threat of commercial development. Working with state, county and city officials to secure funding, Valenzuela helped turn the building into a lively complex of theaters and galleries and invited six other theater companies representing the city's diverse population to discuss future programming, fundraising and marketing. The center opened in fall 2007. Valenzuela also directs plays, including the hugely popular "La Virgen de Guadalupe, Dios Inantzin," an annual pageant based on the story of Mexico's patron saint performed for free at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels. The production, which draws nearly 7,000 people each year, features more than 100 community members as villagers, choir singers and dancers. The theater center is also creating a summer conservatory for young people that will nurture and develop their talent and help them successfully compete for entrance to theater programs at major universities.

Gail Wyatt / To Help Everyone Clinic

To Help Everyone (T.H.E.), one of the few nonprofit health care clinics in southwest Los Angeles, serves part of a dense urban area of more than 1 million people, almost one-third of whom are uninsured. The collaboration

between T.H.E. Clinic and Wyatt began more than 30 years ago, when Wyatt was conducting research for her dissertation on stress among African American mothers and children. Wyatt also contributed to the development of standards of care at the clinic. In recent years, the partnership has focused on women's health. In 1998, Wyatt and the clinic collaborated on a study of sexuality and breast cancer in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., that found that black women were more likely to die from breast cancer and less likely to be screened, findings the clinic integrated into their screening techniques. Wyatt's research through the UCLA Sexual Health Program on the link between sexual abuse, risky sexual behaviors and HIV also influenced the clinic's services — women with a history of violence and trauma are now referred to support groups that focus on increasing awareness and reducing the risk of HIV and developing skills for managing symptoms of trauma, depression and post-traumatic stress. African American and Latina women represent 25 percent of the female population in the U.S. but account for 81 percent of total AIDS diagnoses.

In addition to the Rosenfield Prize, the following two awards will be presented at the ceremony:

Elise Buik

Buik, president and chief executive officer of United Way of Greater Los Angeles (UWGLA), will receive the Community Leader Award. Buik became the first female president and CEO of UWGLA in March 2005, and under her leadership, the organization raised \$56 million during its 2005-06 campaign year. Buik, who joined United Way in 1994, was instrumental in transforming UWGLA from its historical fundraising role into a community-impact organization that identifies social issues, convenes experts, partners with other organizations and crafts innovative solutions. She also shepherded UWGLA's highly praised social reports — including "A Tale of Two Cities," "Latino Scorecard," "Diverse Face of Asian Pacific Islanders in Los Angeles County" and "The State of Black Los Angeles" — which shine a light on social problems in Los Angeles and offer action plans to solve them.

David W. Gjertson / Los Angeles Aquatic Search and Rescue Unit

Gjertson, adjunct professor of biostatistics and pathology at the School of Public Health, and the Los Angeles Aquatic Search and Rescue Unit, a nonprofit organization that works in conjunction with the Special Enforcement Bureau of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Emergency Services Detail, will receive a Special Recognition Award. The award funds will be used to gather data about the safest rates at which divers should ascend after a dive. Studying ascent rates will reduce the risk of decompression sickness, which results when divers ascend too quickly or do not make adequate stops after a long dive. The results will be distributed to other public safety dive units. The aquatic search and rescue unit works throughout Los Angeles County to search for missing persons, murder weapons and stolen vehicles and to make other recoveries.

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