



NEWS

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MAKING THEIR COMMUNITIES HEALTHIER – ANNOUNCING THE 2005 CLEAN AIR CHAMPIONS

Four Community Activists Honored as 2005 Clean Air Champions

SAN FRANCISCO, CA The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District), the American Lung Association, RIDES for Bay Area Commuters and the U.S. EPA are proud to announce the four 2005 Bay Area Clean Air Champions. They are honored for their exceptional efforts to create a healthier environment through cleaner air.

“Our 2005 Champions are everyday people who are exceptionally motivated to change their own communities and make them healthier,” said Air District Executive Officer Jack P. Broadbent. “We are pleased to recognize their efforts towards cleaner air.”

The 2005 Clean Air Champions are active in their local communities to reduce air pollution and improve public health. This year’s winners are:

Steven Moss (San Francisco) – The founder of the San Francisco Power Cooperative has improved air quality and energy conservation by building a “conservation” community in San Francisco’s Bayview district.

Jannat A. Muhammad (Richmond) – A longtime volunteer and community health activist whose efforts include educating and motivating Richmond families to reduce pesticides and fine particle air pollution in their neighborhoods.

Joan Spencer (Gilroy) – A respiratory therapist who has advocated for cleaner air in Gilroy and the South Bay by supporting woodburning ordinances, better trails, new solar housing and solar schools.

Maria Luz Torre (San Francisco) – Her Asthma Relief for Kids (ARK) team worked with the San Francisco School Board to pass a resolution setting clean air standards for the school district’s 250 school buses – the first of its kind in the Bay Area.

The 2005 Clean Air Champions will be honored at a public presentation Wednesday, September 21, 2005 at 939 Ellis Street, San Francisco in the 7th floor Board room. The ceremony will begin at 9:45 a.m.

(MORE)

About the Winners

Joan Spencer (408) 846-0708

"I do it one person at a time; one day at a time," explains Clean Air Champion **Joan Spencer**, a tireless respiratory therapist from Gilroy. Several years ago, Joan began questioning why so many of her patients were experiencing asthma and lung cancer. She concluded that it was partly due to poor local air quality in Gilroy and the South Bay. She jumped into action, and has been unstoppable ever since. In the last few years, Joan has advocated for new solar housing and solar schools, trails for bikers and walkers, helped the city pass a woodburning ordinance, and lobbies for clean air legislation at the state level. Whether she's sitting on the Parks and Recreation Commission, or waiting in line at the grocery store, she never stops spreading the word about pollution and ways to clean up the air.

Jannat A. Muhammad (510) 222-2863

There is good news in Richmond – their air is getting cleaner, thanks, in part, to Clean Air Champion **Jannat A. Muhammad**. A public health advocate and volunteer for 30 years, Jannat has been instrumental in changing community behavior for the benefit of cleaner indoor and outdoor air through her many outreach and public education programs. Through the Neighborhood House project, Jannat rallies community support to address the issues of pesticides and fine particle air pollution, which has contributed to poor health in the North Richmond area. She has helped to establish the Asthma and Diesel Coalition, and was instrumental in surveying the impact of toxic air pollution on neighborhood children. "There is growing concern about how environmental pollution affects the health of our residents, and in particular, the health of our children," explains Jannat. "I believe that by working together, we can bring about the changes necessary to make our community a better and healthier place for us all."

Maria Luz Torre (415) 343-3383

Many San Francisco school kids will have a healthier ride to school this Fall, thanks in part to the work of Clean Air Champion **Maria Luz Torre** and her team of parents at Asthma Relief for Kids (ARK). As a community organizer for Parent Voices in San Francisco for the last ten years, Maria grew concerned about the large numbers of kids with asthma in some neighborhoods, so she formed ARK, a team of parents of kids with asthma. Last year, Maria and her ARK team worked on a campaign to reduce the diesel emissions from the 250 school buses serving 10,000 school kids in San Francisco. Their efforts included countless hours of research, meetings with school officials and clean air technology experts, a signature campaign, and presentations about the hazards of diesel particulates in school buses. Their hard work has paid off -- the San Francisco School Board passed a resolution setting clean air standards for school buses, and the clean-up begins this coming school year. This is the first of its kind in the Bay Area. "We have to provide the healthiest environment possible for kids on their way to and from school, and these are very toxic fumes," Torre said. "They're a hazard to all kids, but especially those with asthma."

(more)

Steven Moss (415) 626-8723

Steven Moss has succeeded in building community around environmental issues in San Francisco's Bayview and Potrero neighborhoods. "I've always worked on the policy side of the environment," explains Steven. "The SF Power Co-Op is a way to work within a community and make real changes that we can see." Steven founded the San Francisco Community Power Cooperative as a way to actively and constructively reduce air pollution in the Bayview by working with community members. The SF Power Co-Op has enrolled 2,000 businesses and residences as paid members. Employing Bayview-Hunters Point residents, he has installed energy-saving devices into thousands of homes and businesses in the neighborhood. And, while the residents reduce their own energy consumption, the SF Power Co-Op also provides them with the information and motivation that they need to advocate for closing power plants and reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

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