Katie Albertson
Director of Governmental Affairs

2222 "M" Street
Merced, CA 95340
(209) 385-7636
(209) 385-7673 Fax
www.co.merced.ca.us

Equal Opportunity Employer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE May 6, 2009

CONTACT: Katie Albertson 209.385.7636

MERCED COUNTY VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PROGRAM 2009 RECIPIENTS HONORED

Program honors work of community volunteers

MERCED – This morning, the Merced County Board of Supervisors honored individuals and groups who provide volunteer community services within Merced County as part of the County's Volunteer Recognition Program. The volunteers were nominated by members of the community and honored by the Board for their work in the County.

"It is the work of these volunteers and many like them in our community that creates a strong sense of community in our County," commented Chairman Deidre Kelsey. "From feeding the homeless, to advocating for migrant health care, to working with the children in our community, we have a wonderful group of volunteers here today who have taken to heart the cause of caring for others. Looking at this group, I know that none of them do this work for any recognition or honor – they all reach out to those in need and care for their neighbors because it is the right thing to do."

Today's honorees included:

INDIVIDUALS:

Charlene Armstrong
Volunteers over 520 hours annually to the Breakfast Lions, LWV Merced County, and United Methodist. The majority of her volunteerism is in children, donating time for the fireworks booth, breakfasts, garage sales to name a few. She is also a member of the Soroptimist International and the Beta Sigma Phi.

Fred Buckingham
Before and after retiring from the California Highway Patrol after 29 years, he has dedicated his time to several organizations in the Merced area. These include Merced over 50 Club, Merced College Women's Hoopster Booster, Merced County Emergency Medical Care Committee, Merced County Medical Reserve Corps, Merced City Measure C Oversight Committee, Merced City Personnel Board, spokesperson for the Loughborough Area Watch, Kiwanis Club, blood donor, and United Way donor and volunteer.

Alicia Dicochea
Annually volunteers 180 + hours. In 1974, Los Banos had no type of healthcare services for migrant workers. However, that changed with a rural health grant to begin a center. A youth organization was created of farmworkers and Alicia was one of the members. Since then, she has volunteered in a variety of positions advocating and improving healthcare services for migrant workers in Los Banos. She is also a member of the Mexican-American Social Organization.

Bill and Betty Gnass
For the past couple of years, Bill and Betty have annually been volunteering 150 + hours at the Salvation Army Homeless Shelter feeding the homeless every Thursday morning starting at 5:30 AM without missing a day. They also get other community members to come and volunteer, and once, had a Korean family visiting Merced volunteer the entire month they were visiting.

Georgia Johnson (2 Nominations)
Has volunteered annually 1,500 + hours serving as the President of the Atwater Historical Society (*1st nomination)* for over 17 years. She has done every conceivable job for the historical society from sweeping the floor and giving tours at the Bloss Home Museum to conducting meetings, taking minutes, etc. In addition to volunteering her time with the historical society, she is also a member of the Atwater Women's Club (**2nd nomination)* which she volunteers over 100 + hours annually helping with renovations of the Women's club building, attending meetings, and fundraisers. She also participates in the Fruitland Improvement Club.

David Langley
Has been the League Coordinator for the Dos Palos Girls Softball for the past ten (10) years, taking the league from a struggling organization to a first rate program. In addition to running the program, he has made numerous improvements to the fields and facility at O'Banion field for all to enjoy.

Flora Martinez
Since 1971, (38 years) she has advocated and volunteered her time in bringing healthcare to migrant workers to the Planada / Le Grand area and currently serves as a board member for the Golden Valley Health Care.

Alex McCabe
Annually volunteers 200+ hours to the Livingston FFA. He not only donates his time driving the students to practices and competitions, he also has donated hundreds of dollars for transportation and projects.

Wayne Medina
Has volunteered 100 + hours annually for years doing handywork and organizing events for the Gustine Chamber of Commerce including the 4th of July Committee, Lions Club, Schools, etc. Organized the adoption of the Fighting Squadron from Lemoore Naval Base, holding an annual BBQ for 1,700 to 1,900 personnel at the base.

Nadine Nauman
Has volunteered for the past 50 years in the elections process in Snelling, CA.

Shirley Olson
Volunteers 200 + hours annually to several organizations. This includes the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission since 1982 and has been the Chair the past five (5) years, volunteering as a Kindergarten Aide, Every Fifteen Minutes, the Somoto/Merced Sister City Board of Directors, NORCAL Sister Cities International, Livingston Wakami Sister City Leadership, Youth Accountability, YESS, and Methodist Yamato Enterprises Board.

Joe & Bonnie Roberts
Volunteers with the Salvation Army, helping to keep it open to serve approximately 5,000 homeless individuals each month in the Los Banos area, providing food, clothing, housing, transportation, and emergency assistance.

Kelly Thomas
Volunteers approximately 825 hours annually in the Winton area, performing all types of kid and community activities. These include maintenance of the baseball field, snack bar, coaching, clean-up, etc. Also serves on the Winton MAC, volunteers for the spring festival, and many other events.

Lynn "Sandy" Wakeling
Annually volunteers 1,040 + hours to a variety of youth activities and the Boy Scouts in Los Banos. Youth activities include youth hunter safety courses, scholastic youth trap shooting programs, purchasing equipment for youth less fortunate, and 4-H.

Barbara Weaver
Volunteers as a board member for the Golden Valley Health Center, volunteering approximately 75 hours annually. In addition, she is involved in numerous community activities in Dos Palos.

Ernestine Woods
Board member for the Golden Valley Health Center. Currently, she serves as the Chair for the Community Board and volunteers approximately 75 + hours annually. In addition to her work for Golden Valley, she also holds positions on other committees as well including the Merced Symphony Association and the Merced County Arts Council.

GROUPS:

Gustine Chamber of Commerce
Adopted the Fighting Squadron from Lemoore Naval Base, which volunteers from the Chamber travel down to Lemoore every year to hold an annual BBQ for 1,700 to 1,900 personnel at the base.

H.I.C.A.P.
The local HICAP office has been handling a large number of senior citizens in enrolling them in Medicare. The workload is such that, without the aid of volunteers, the process would have taken countless hours and excess time and money. For 2008, 724 clients were served, with $434,820 in savings.

Merced Breakfast Lions Club
"To See & Hear a Better Tomorrow". This is the purpose of the Merced Breakfast Lions Club. They have volunteered approximately 3,300 hours and $25,000 to community support including collecting and recycling 3,500 eyeglasses, one-dozen hearing aids, cooking, bicycle races, cleaning up streets and highways.

Winton MAC
The Winton MAC is a fifteen (15) member board which serves the residents in the community. They serve not only as an advocate to the community providing input and recommendations to the county, but also take a hands-on approach in holding events that bring the community together.

- 30 –

For more information regarding Merced County, please visit our website at www.co.merced.ca.us.