

NOVEMBER 2023

© Best Version Media

A PRIVATE MAGAZINE FOR THE RESIDENTS OF LOS ALTOS HILLS, CALIFORNIA

LOS ALTOS *Hills*

ALSO INSIDE

THE CALIFORNIA
FESTIVAL

ART SHOW AT OCEAN
BLUE VAULT

An Event that Honors the Community's
**Most Influential
Volunteers**

Laurel Iverson, Event Chair for the 2023
Joint Community Volunteer Service Awards,
and Sandy Mingia, 2024 Event Chair.
Photo by Sherry Auerbach

POWERED BY
BVM
BEST VERSION MEDIA



Honoring the Community's **Most Influential Volunteers**

By Abbie Burgess

This year is the 40th Joint Community Volunteer Service Awards, which celebrate honorees at a luncheon the first week of December at the Crowne Plaza Cabana Hotel in Palo Alto. For the past four decades, the City of Los Altos and the Town of Los Altos Hills have recognized a few select individuals who have provided extraordinary volunteer services in the community. The awardees are chosen by a 12-member committee, who are appointed by the two City Councils. Committee members are active in their community and passionate about volunteering.

The 2023 Awards Luncheon will be on Dec. 8, with Jan McDaniel as the speaker. Jan is the Founder of the annual community volunteer event Compassion Week, Chairperson of the Bold Service & Social Justice Committee at Los Altos United Methodist Church, and a Joint Community Volunteer Service Awardee in 2021.

"For the honorees, it's like getting a Nobel Prize for being a good person," says committee member Sandy Mingia. Sandy is retired from high-tech sales and marketing and has lived in Los Altos Hills since 1991. She is highly involved in the community of Los Altos Hills herself—She is Director of Operations for the Rotary Club of Los Altos, acting in 2021 and 2022 as Director of their major annual fundraiser, The Los Altos Rotary Fine Art in the Park.

The Joint Community Volunteer Service Awards is truly a partnership between the two cities, with responsibilities passed back and forth each year between Los Altos and Los Altos Hills. Next year it will go back to Los Altos Hills, with Sandy as the Chair.

"It's a feel-good event, with 200-plus attendees celebrating terrific volunteers who have done much for our communities," describes this year's Event Chair, Laurel Iverson, who has been active in the community since she and her family moved to Los Altos in 2002. She got involved in the Joint Community Volunteer Service Awards because she was interested in participating in city government. Laurel was a member of the Los Altos Public Arts Commission for several years and has worked for Los Altos Community Foundation since 2014.



Los Altos City Staff and other attendees enjoying the luncheon.

Continued >>>

The Resident Feature is sponsored by the Lenz-Gilchrist Team.

Our goal is to help you pursue yours.
It's that simple.

At Merrill, we'll help you get ready for the future with a financial approach that's designed for you.



Lenz-Gilchrist Team

Marian Lenz, CIMA®, CFP®, CPFA®

First Vice President
Wealth Management Advisor
Senior Portfolio Advisor

marian_lenz@ml.com

Merrill Lynch Wealth Management

3075A Hansen Way
2nd Floor
Palo Alto, CA 94304

650.473.7888

fa.ml.com/lenz-gilchrist-team



Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated (also referred to as "MLPF&S" or "Merrill") makes available certain investment products sponsored, managed, distributed or provided by companies that are affiliates of Bank of America Corporation ("BofA Corp."). MLPF&S is a registered broker-dealer, registered investment adviser, Member SIPC and a wholly owned subsidiary of BofA Corp.

Investment products: **Are Not FDIC Insured** **Are Not Bank Guaranteed** **May Lose Value**

The Bull Symbol and Merrill are registered trademarks of Bank of America Corporation.

CIMA® is a registered certification mark of the Investments & Wealth Institute®. For more information about the Institute and the CIMA certification, please visit investmentsandwealth.org. CFP Board owns the marks CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™, and CFP® (with plaque design) in the U.S.

A Senior Portfolio Advisor can help clients pursue their objectives by managing on a discretionary basis custom investment strategies, selecting from a wide range of Merrill model portfolios and third-party investment strategies.

© 2023 Bank of America Corporation. All rights reserved.

MAP5514095 | AD-09-23-0140.A | 470948PM-0223 | 09/2023

"I believe strongly in volunteerism," explains Laurel, who has decades of volunteer experience in local schools, including as PTA President, the Los Altos Educational Foundation, and Mountain View Los Altos High School Foundation. "At education foundations, volunteerism is critical to the organization. Volunteers make a real difference in our schools, towns, and local nonprofits." She adds, "I like seeing volunteers acknowledged."

On December 8th, a new group of six to ten hardworking, deserving volunteers will be revealed as the 2023 honorees. These individuals will join a prestigious list of past awardees who provided exemplary service to the Los Altos Hills and Los Altos area.

Last year, nine individuals were honored for a wide range of civic engagement. Steve Apfelberg was recognized for his work with Little League and Los Altos School District; Deborah Baker for coordinating the Los Altos Festival of Lights Parade; Ann Duwe for Los Altos Hills pathways and Peninsula Open Space Trust; Michele Barnett Gaskil for supporting St. Francis High School; Cindy Hill who serves North County and Los Altos libraries; Maria Liu for her involvement in education including Blach Intermediate School, Loyola School and the Los Altos School District; Edward Taft for supporting El Camino Hospital Foundation and the Los Altos History Museum; Frank Verlot, Past President of Rotary Club of Los Altos; and Sue Welch for substantial work on Open Space, Los Altos Hills pathways, and town environmental issues.

Forty years ago, the idea for the Joint Community Volunteer Service Awards was developed in 1983 by Los Altos Mayor Jane Reed and Los Altos Hills Mayor Mary van Tamelen. "The two women were driving to a convention together in Sacramento," describes Laurel. "My understanding is they were trying to bring Los Altos and Los Altos Hills together." Searching for a way to unite the two neighboring towns, they were inspired to find a way to salute the people doing great deeds in those communities. They mused that not only would it create camaraderie between the two cities, but it might inspire others to give back as well.

When writing about the origin story of the awards, Jane Reed said, "We decided we needed to work together. Mary and I decided we should do something for all the good volunteers in town who never get recognized. So we ended up doing a luncheon. We wanted to honor people who were the unsung heroes of our two towns...it's a really good program and I hope it keeps going."

Do you know an extraordinary volunteer in Los Altos or Los Altos Hills that the committee might consider for an award? Nominations for 2023 closed in October; but next year the event will be back for its 41st year, ready to honor a new group of previously unsung heroes.

The Joint Community Volunteer Service Awards luncheon is open to the public. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.jointvolunteerawards.com.



Committee members greet attendees at check-in.