

California Public Utilities Commission



PUC HONORS EMPLOYEES FOR OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 22, 2005- The California Public Utilities Commission today honored three employees with the inaugural Wes Franklin Award for Outstanding Community Service.

Mary Evans, Cindy Philapil, and Laura Lei Strain were nominated by peers for the award, which was established in honor of former PUC executive director, Wes Franklin, who consistently led and supported efforts to increase employee involvement in community service. Mr. Franklin recently retired from the Commission after more than 30 years of public service.

“This award is recognition of the volunteer efforts of Mary, Cindy, and Laura Lei, who have shown such a strong dedication to the well-being of the people in their communities,” said PUC Executive Director Steve Larson, who honored the recipients at today’s Commission meeting.

“I am continually impressed at the volunteer spirit of the staff of the PUC,” said Mr. Franklin. “Whether it’s through our partnership with the John Swett School, the United Way Campaign, or our blood drives and book fairs, the staff of the PUC never fail to come through for those in need. Mary, Cindy, and Laura Lei exemplify that spirit and I am humbled to honor them today.”

There will be a plaque placed in the lobby of the PUC’s San Francisco building with the names of this year’s recipients. In addition, each recipient will receive an individual plaque and \$100.

Below are brief profiles of the honorees and their contributions to their community:

Mary Evans, Assistant Public Advisor, serves as a volunteer Regional Camp Director for the Sickie Cell Community Health Network’s Sickie Cell Summer Camp, based in Oakland. The Sickie Cell Camp serves approximately 100 youth ages 7-17 afflicted with sickie cell anemia. Ms. Evans recruits and trains the medical professionals and staff and works with parents of the children attending the camp. In the past, Ms. Evans has served as health care advocate and grief counselor for many families. Currently, she is working on a \$1 million grant application for the camp.

In addition, to dedicating more than 75 hours per year with the Sickle Cell Community Health Network, Ms. Evans volunteers for the Colour Me Freedom Foundation of Panorama City, a non-profit organization spearheading outreach efforts to combat and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa through financial and educational support. She has collected toys and clothes for the foundation, which responded to Hurricane Katrina by donating those items - toys, clothes, books, food, and toiletries - to the disaster areas in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama

Cindy Philapil, an associate government program analyst, volunteers six weeks a year (approximately 80 hours) as the organizer for the Food for the Bar campaign, tutors at the John Swett Elementary School and works at the San Francisco Food Bank sorting food. Food for the Bar is an annual program focused on raising funds to address childhood hunger sponsored by the Bar Association of San Francisco. Through Ms. Philapil's efforts between 2003 and 2005 the Commission raised over \$17,800 (each dollar raised is turned into approximately \$9 worth of food), donated 2,700 pounds of food, and volunteered over 220 hours for the San Francisco Food Bank.

In addition, Ms. Philapil volunteers at the John Swett School in San Francisco once a week. Recently, she organized a field trip for kindergarteners and recruited upper grade students to serve as volunteers.

Laura Lei Strain, a public utilities regulatory analyst, devotes her volunteer efforts to the American Red Cross Bay Area and to the West Valley Emergency Services Volunteer Fire Department in San Jose. She started volunteering with the Red Cross in 1993 and serves approximately 20 hours each month. Ms. Strain wears a number of hats at the Red Cross. She has taught more than 3,000 people life saving skills, including First Aid and CPR, served on numerous committees, and is a Health and Safety Instructor. She has also provided emergency care to numerous spectators and participants at the Red Cross First Aid Stations at events around the Bay Area.

Ms. Strain, who plans to donate her award winnings to the Hurricane Katrina relief effort, also serves an average of 25 hours a month since 1997 at the Volunteer Fire Department, focusing her energy on the Youth Emergency Services (YES) Camp, which offers youth 14-19 years old the opportunity to experience what it's like to work in the fields of emergency medical care, firefighting, law enforcement, and search and rescue. As a Medical Officer, she provides medial attention and reviews all patient care reports to ensure proper treatment and care.

For more information on the PUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov

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