

Locals honored with Human Rights Awards

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April 17th, 2013

Locals honored with Human Rights Awards

MIDDLETOWN - The Orange County Human Rights Commission held its 18th Annual Awards Dinner last Thursday. The dinner honored recipients of this year's Human Rights Award: Victoria Garloch, JoAnne Gurda, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh, William Kaplan, Latinos Unidos of the Hudson Valley and Anita Manley.



The OC Human Rights Commission recently recognized Latinos Unidos of the Hudson Valley (Richard Rivera), Victoria Garloch, Anita Manley, JoAnne Gurda, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh (Cathy Collins) and William Kaplan. Hudson Valley Press/CHUCK STEWART, JR.

At 15, Warwick Valley High School student Victoria Garloch saw a need for a soup kitchen following two back-to-back hurricanes in the Black Dirt Region of Orange County. She sought approvals, raised money and organized volunteers before offering the first dinner on November 18, 2011 in the former Pine Island elementary school.

JoAnne Gurda gained a reputation as a tireless advocate for social change and equality for the county's most vulnerable populations during her 36-year career with the Orange County Department of Social Services. She led the development of a series of housing projects serving homeless families as well as a Neighborhood Resource Center in Newburgh. She was instrumental in the County's Parolee Re-entry Program and helped develop the Center for Hope.

Since 1999, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh has been providing hard working families a "hand up, not a hand out." They have built 62 houses and have accepted 327 children and adults into their homeownership program. Habitat homeowners contribute \$300,000 annually to city and school tax rolls and the homeownership program has returned over \$7 million to the City of Newburgh's assessed property values.

William Kaplan is the founder of the Kaplan Family Charitable Foundation, which concentrates on support of innovative and sustainable projects primarily in Newburgh. He has directed major gifts to Mount Saint Mary College, SUNY Orange, Occupations, St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital, McQuade Foundation and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh. It is his vision, commitment and enduring energy that contribute most to the multitude of programs he supports.

Since its founding in 2001, Latinos Unidos of the Hudson Valley has been advocating and referring in the areas of immigration, education, economic development, housing and other issues affecting the community at large. It regularly collaborates with various organizations such as healthcare providers, the US Census Bureau and Safe Homes in order to increase access to, as well as inform individuals of, various services that are available to them in the community.

The leader of the Newburgh PFLAG chapter, Anita Manley is committed to building better relationships and fostering the rights of the gay community of Orange County. She recognized the need for PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) following suicides of young people who were bullied due to their real or perceived sexual orientation. She hopes to set a tone of acceptance and rights for this generation and generations to come.

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Legendary musician Richie Havens passes away at 72. RIP Richie. You will be missed.

Legendary musician Richie Havens passes away at 72

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Born in Brooklyn, Havens was the eldest of nine children. At an early age, he began organizing his neighborhood friends into street corner doo-wop groups and was performing with the McCrea Gospel Sinners at 16 years old. At

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