



**Official News Release: For Immediate Release**

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November 10, 2011

**2011 Contra Costa Philanthropy Awards Breakfast  
celebrates the generous human spirit**

***Organizations and individuals honored for giving back to their community***

November 10, 2011, Concord—The Contra Costa Council’s inaugural Contra Costa Philanthropy Awards Breakfast shined a warm light on a selfless and generous spirit that appears to be alive and well in Contra Costa County. Some 400 people attended the breakfast celebration today, honoring individuals, businesses and service organizations that have made significant contributions of time, leadership and financial support to benefit Contra Costa residents.

“This event is dedicated to the generosity of so many great people and organizations that build a richness in our region, a richness that cannot be counted in dollars,” said Mark Hughes of ConocoPhillips, breakfast emcee and co-chair of the Council’s Social Responsibility Task Force, which organized the event.

“Pick something you care about, and do something about it,” said panelist Michael Day, chief financial officer of AAA Northern California, Nevada & Utah. “Be passionate and make a difference,” added panelist Linda Padon, general manager, corporate public policy of Chevron, in her remarks.

“We don’t see ourselves as philanthropists,” said Don Ritchey, who shared an award as “outstanding philanthropist” with his wife Sharon. “We see worthwhile things and we try and support them. There ought to be a place for this in everyone’s life.”

Honored as 2011 Contra Costa Philanthropy Award recipients were (see attached information):

- Outstanding Corporate Philanthropist (501 employees and above) — **Chevron**, represented by Matt Lonner, manager of Global Partnerships and Programs at Chevron
- Outstanding Corporate Philanthropist (100 to 500 employees) — **Burr Pilger Mayer, Inc.**, represented by Rob Anderson, partner
- Outstanding Corporate Philanthropist (1 to 99 employees) — **Lescure Company**, represented by Mike Lescure, president
- Outstanding Philanthropist — **Don and Sharon Ritchey**

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- Outstanding Foundation or Community Grant Maker — **Dean & Margaret Lesher Foundation**, represented by Kathleen Odne, executive director, and Steve Leshar, board member
- Outstanding Collaborative Project — **Acalanes Ridge Collaboration**, including the East Bay Regional Park District, represented by Bob Doyle, general manager, and Nancy Wenninger, land acquisition manager; City of Lafayette, represented by Carl Anduri, mayor; City of Walnut Creek, represented by Cindy Silva, mayor, and Bob Simmons, mayor pro tem; and the Muir Heritage Land Trust, represented by Linus Eukel, executive director
- Volunteer of the Year — **Ray Zenoni**, resident of Pleasant Hill
- Lifetime Achievement — **Assistance League of Diablo Valley**, represented by Lori Quinlan, board president

The event featured a keynote address by Lisa Stevens, Wells Fargo executive vice president and president of California retail banking. A panel discussion moderated by Jo Mackness, executive director, corporate responsibility, UC Berkeley Haas School of Business, included Michael Day of AAA Northern California, Nevada and Utah, and Linda Padon, general manager of global corporate public policy, Chevron.

Program sponsors were Wells Fargo Bank (presenting sponsor); Chevron (premier sponsor); AAA of Northern California, Nevada and Utah, ConocoPhillips, Contra Costa Times, Diablo Magazine, InVision Communications, San Francisco Business Times, Shell Martinez Refinery (benefactor sponsors); John Muir Health and Kaiser Permanente (advocate sponsors).

Contra Costa TV will air the program on Tuesday, November 22, at 9 p.m.; Monday, November 28, at 10 a.m. and Wednesday, November 30, at 3 p.m. CCTV is Comcast channel 27, Astound channel 32 and AT&T U-verse channel 99. For additional air dates, please visit CCTV's program guide at [www.contracostatv.org](http://www.contracostatv.org).

**About the Contra Costa Council:** The Council is a private sector, public policy organization with a membership that includes business, government, education and labor. The mission of the Council is to provide advocacy on public policy issues affecting the economic vitality and quality of life in Contra Costa County and the region. For more information, see [www.contracostacouncil.com](http://www.contracostacouncil.com).

#### PHOTO CAPTION:

The 2011 Contra Costa Philanthropy Award recipients include (from left): Matt Lonner of Chevron, Bob Doyle of the East Bay Regional Park District, Cindy Silva of the City of Walnut Creek, Kathleen Odne of the Dean and Margaret Leshar Foundation, Linus Eukel of the Muir Heritage Land Trust, Nancy Wenninger of the East Bay Regional Park District, Don Ritchey (Sharon Ritchey is not pictured), Mike Lescure of Lescure Company, Lori Quinlan of the Assistance League of Diablo Valley, Rob Anderson of Burr Pilger Mayer, Ray Zenoni, Carl Anduri of the City of Lafayette, Bob Simmons of the City of Walnut Creek and Steve Leshar of the Leshar Foundation. (Photo by Robert Temple Photography)

(Please see the next pages for information about the awards and award recipients.)

## 2011 Contra Costa Philanthropy Award Recipients

***Outstanding Corporate Philanthropist (500 plus employees):*** Recognizes community-minded corporate citizens who through their foundation, corporate giving program and/or employees, commit significant resources to assist organizations in meeting community needs.

### **Chevron**

Chevron, through both its philanthropic and volunteer programs, has been called the preeminent corporate citizen in Contra Costa County. As a community leader, it has also been the driving force behind many education and economic development initiatives transforming West County.

The company's approach to volunteer programs is unique and comprehensive, involving ongoing programs, events and incentives to volunteer. Chevron Humankind, the company's employee and retiree charitable program, donated some \$1.6 million to 515 nonprofits and schools within the county in calendar year 2010. This year-round effort matches participants' financial contributions to favorite nonprofit causes, makes grants for volunteer time, and organizes company-sponsored volunteer projects. Chevron's Grants for Good program supports individual and Chevron-sponsored projects, providing up to \$500 for 20 hours of community service and \$1,000 for up to 40 hours annually.

Other volunteer opportunities include Chevron Volunteer Week, a week of service when Chevron partners with the Volunteer Center of the East Bay to connect employees to nonprofits. In 2010 more than 2,350 employees participated in 80 projects at 90 Bay Area nonprofits. The company also sponsors United Way's Week of Caring, which in 2010 saw 2,250 Chevron employees volunteer at 200 Bay Area projects, and the annual Nonprofit Expos, which introduce and connect agencies directly with employees.

Chevron has chosen a unique strategy of dedicating company staff to partnerships with school districts like Mt. Diablo Unified, San Ramon Unified and West Contra Costa Unified to work collaboratively in identifying effective strategies for developing Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) practices in schools, and supporting the expansion of Project Lead the Way sequences of courses in high schools. The company has also provided direct funding for teacher training and the purchase of equipment and materials. Chevron has been a sponsor for many educational events and symposia related to STEM career pathways.

### ***Outstanding Corporate Philanthropy (100 to 500 employees)***

#### **Burr Pilger Mayer, Inc.**

Founded in 1986 by three partners with a common goal—"a commitment to the community where we live, work and play"—Burr Pilger Mayer (BPM, which also stands for "because people matter") has over 400 employees in six locations. Employees serve on boards, do independent volunteering, participate in fundraisers and take part in a favorite tradition: BPM Day, a firm-wide program when employees put on their "there's more to life than work" tee-shirts and go "to work" in their communities. In 2010, they worked at the George Miller Center in Concord, building a bocce ball court, staining benches and gardening. In 2011, they worked at the Ruth Bancroft Gardens in Walnut Creek, constructing shade structures and doing other tasks. For 16 years, employees have adopted



multiple families and seniors as part of the Adopted Family Program. Other events have included Daffodil Days, a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, and a holiday gift project last December for nine foster children at Youth Homes.

BPM has also had an impact on the community through its business commitments. Since 1993, the BPM Foundation has donated over \$600,000 to Bay Area charities. The company presents complimentary training-through-sharing sessions covering significant emerging issues for nonprofits through BPM University's Nonprofit Education Series. BPM's Community Outreach Committee encourages staff participation in local organizations by assisting them in selecting opportunities that match their interests and skills with the needs in the community. In 2008, when it became apparent during the bad economy that BPM had available staff hours that would go unfilled, a new program was initiated, offering nonprofit organizations 40 hours of donated time for a special accounting project.

### *Outstanding Corporate Philanthropy (1 to 99 employees)*

#### **Lescure Company, Inc.**

The Lescure Company is a plumbing, heating, mechanical services and engineering firm, based in Lafayette. As the largest Contra Costa owned and operated subcontractor working on the new patient care towers at John Muir Health Center's campuses in Walnut Creek and Concord, Company President Mike Lescure and his brothers, Alan and Brian, repeatedly affirmed during construction that the project was a way of giving back to the community. In addition, the company made a significant six-figure gift to the health center's capital campaign, and so inspired other contractors and subcontractors to contribute that their campaign gifts totaled over \$1 million.

Each year, Lescure employees contribute thousands of dollars to between 10 and 20 organizations and schools. The company makes in-kind donations to Habitat for Humanity and the Interfaith Housing Coalition (CCIH). For years, Lescure employees have provided mechanical services at Garden Park Apartments, one of CCIH's permanent supportive housing sites, at no cost. In the past year, Lescure has contributed pre-construction and design support for a community room expansion project, and redesigned and constructed a property drainage system—employing residents of the program to do the work and offering a job and mentorship to high-risk youth.

Other projects include a watering system for the Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center in Orinda and preparing to host 227 students from student chapters of the National Mechanical Contractors Association of America for an education tour and 3D modeling presentation of the mechanical systems being installed at the UC Berkeley Memorial Stadium. During the economic downturn, the company supported longstanding colleagues who found themselves without a job, offering office space, computer network access, training and education.

***Outstanding Philanthropist:*** Pays tribute to an exceptional individual and/or family who generously provides a lead gift, substantially assists a nonprofit organization or offers philanthropic leadership.

#### **Don and Sharon Ritchey**

Danville residents Don and Sharon Ritchey were key to the success of the capital campaign for John Muir Health, which finishes at year-end. Their lead gift of more than \$1 million helped fund the new



towers in Walnut Creek and Concord—specifically the Sharon Garden at the front of the Walnut Creek hospital and the Children’s Playroom in the Concord Emergency Department. Don was a member of the steering committee organized in 2003 that developed the original case for support for the campaign, and the couple helped cultivate gifts from other major donors. The Ritcheys have supported John Muir Health since 1992, and Sharon has been a donor for 10 years to the John Muir Health Women’s Philanthropic Circle.

In addition, the Ritcheys established a perpetual fund at the Danville Library, and contribute to the Library endowment fund and Library Friends. Other major support has included “Strolling in Danville,” bronze signage at the town entry; the All Wars Memorial and Veterans Wall of Honor construction campaigns; the Danville Depot restoration and the Museum of the San Ramon Valley; the Danville Area Cultural Alliance; Role Players Ensemble Theatre and the YMCA’s local campaign.

Don and Sharon’s volunteer leadership is also impressive. As John Muir Health Board chair for two years and Finance Committee chair for six, Don participated in the planning of the new patient care towers. He is a current member of the John Muir Physician Network Board. He was on the Danville Town Council from 1987 to 1995, serving twice as mayor. He was a member of the East Bay Community Foundation and the Investment Committee of the Tri-Valley Community Fund. Sharon chaired the organization that became the Danville Arts Commission, and organized the committee to establish what is now the Danville Area Cultural Alliance.

***Outstanding Foundation or Community Grant Maker:*** Recognizes a community grant-making organization that offers funds, encouragement and motivation to nonprofits and grant makers while supporting nonprofits’ organizational goals.

## **Dean & Margaret Leshar Foundation**

The Dean & Margaret Leshar Foundation epitomizes philanthropy in Contra Costa County. Established in 1989, the foundation makes grants each year totaling over \$3 million. It also promotes Contra Costa philanthropy to the larger Bay Area community and introduces the county’s nonprofits to other foundations.

The Leshar Foundation has supported many important initiatives in the arts, education and children and family services. In early 2011, the foundation awarded a major five-year grant to the Diablo Regional Arts Association, the nonprofit partner for the Leshar Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek, to continue its outreach programs to children and underserved populations and to enhance the quality of programs. In 2010-11, the foundation provided nearly \$1 million to a long list of arts organizations—from the California Shakespeare Theatre to the California Symphony to the National Institute of Arts and Disabilities in Richmond. Other major gifts include a two-year grant to help Richmond’s East Bay Center for the Performing Arts renovate its historic home and a grant to the historic El Campanil Theatre in Antioch. The foundation also underwrites the production costs for the Leshar Speaker Series at the Leshar Center.

The foundation has long been a supporter of programs serving low-income and homeless families in Contra Costa. It funded SHELTER, Inc.’s first transitional housing program for homeless families, the Pittsburg Family Center, and has supported the Lyle Morris Family Center in Antioch, the Mountain View Emergency Family Shelter in Martinez and the East Contra Costa Transitional Family Centers.



In another example, the foundation has provided grants to Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa to cover operational costs and to finance a new dining room in Pittsburg. The foundation has also been a longtime supportive partner of STAND! For Families Free of Violence and numerous other nonprofit organizations.

***Outstanding Collaborative Project:*** Recognizes a partnership or group demonstrating exceptional innovation and creativity resulting in a broad-based community benefit. Their activities excel at building support, raising funds and increasing public awareness.

**Acalanes Ridge Collaboration**—*Muir Heritage Land Trust, East Bay Regional Park District, City of Lafayette and City of Walnut Creek*

The 23 acres of open space in Acalanes Ridge encompasses the most visually significant promontory in the area. Located within the City of Lafayette and at the western border of the City of Walnut Creek, the property offers a scenic ridgeline visible from Lafayette, Walnut Creek, and the Highway 24 and 680 corridors. The most innovative aspect of the Acalanes Ridge Collaboration is the unique partnership upon which it is based. Through ongoing collaboration among the partners—the Muir Heritage Land Trust, the City of Lafayette, the City of Walnut Creek and the East Bay Regional Park District—this important natural area will be permanently protected as open space for public recreation and enjoyment.

For years, the property's owners, the City of Lafayette and community members could not find common ground on the fate of the property. While the property's value as open space had long been recognized and advocated by community members and environmentalists, no one city or agency could generate the resources needed to preserve the land. When the Muir Heritage Land Trust (MHLT) became involved with the project four years ago, it continued negotiations with the owners and built a relationship that allowed substantive discussions and the eventual sale of the property in February 2010 to MHLT.

While MHLT holds title to the property, its partners hold a conservation easement that permanently protects the land from development. The partners pledged funds from Measure WW to help purchase the land, and MHLT raised money from other partners and individuals to cover costs associated with acquisition, stewardship, administration, planning and an endowment for long-range management. Major contributors were the Walnut Creek Open Space Fund, Seaborg Open Space Fund, The San Francisco Foundation, and many anonymous donors and individuals, including those responding to the campaign to Save our Open Spaces by Gary Bogue in the *Contra Costa Times*.

***Outstanding Volunteer of the Year:*** Recognizes a volunteer(s) who starts, supports, and/or enhances the programs and services that an organization provides, and makes a difference in the organization's ability to serve its community.

## **Ray Zenoni**

Pleasant Hill resident Ray Zenoni is a talented and dedicated volunteer for Meals on Wheels and Senior Outreach Services (MOWSOS), and regularly supports five other nonprofit organizations and three more on an as-needed basis. Ray does all this with an upbeat attitude and a smile on his face. He also mentors those he works with, so that staff members benefit from learning new skills. Plus, he



manages to have a balanced personal life—serving as a shining example of how to make a difference in the community and care for yourself at the same time.

In his work for MOWSOS, Ray creates the program for the annual crab dinner and fundraiser, working with staff on design and layout, and creating advertisements for sponsors and donated goods. His work on the Bay Area Dine Out for Meals on Wheels, held each year in October, has included designing the event's first logo, finding a website designer to create a website pro bono, and creating an event flyer and poster. Now that the fundraiser encompasses the seven Bay Area counties, Ray remains involved in design and restaurant recruiting. With MOWSOS's recent good fortune to receive a Taproot grant for a new website redesign, he is the primary member of the Taproot committee. He is also a Meals on Wheels volunteer driver, a past volunteer with Friendly Visitors, a founding member of Friends of Meals on Wheels and a member of the MOWSOS Board.

Other organizations benefiting from Ray's creative skills and expertise are Senior Helpline Services, Caring Hands, Volunteer Center of the East Bay, Senior Mobility Action Council, Culture to Culture Foundation, Guardian Adult Day Care, Opportunity Junction and Northern California Adult Day Care Network.

***Lifetime Achievement Award:*** Presented to an exceptional individual or Contra Costa County-based organization that motivates others to give, commits time and energy without compensation, and provides talent for strategy, relationship enhancement, and the successful solicitation of donations.

### **Assistance League of Diablo Valley**

The Assistance League of Diablo Valley, one of 120 Assistance League chapters across the United States, is celebrating 45 years of service to the people and communities of Contra Costa County. During 2010-11, more than 430 dedicated member volunteers gave over 64,000 hours and touched the lives of more than 14,000 people in Contra Costa communities through eight philanthropic programs.

Operation School Bell provides new clothing and shoes to school children in need, with the goal of giving the students a positive starting point for learning and academic success. During 2010-11, volunteers helped clothe some 3,500 children from 36 schools; over the past 16 years, the league has provided clothing to more than 25,000 elementary students. In another example, the league focuses its support for emancipating foster youth by providing scholarships for continuing education and funding some senior-year expenses. Working with the county's Independent Living Skills Program, volunteers equip each graduating senior with a large duffel bag filled with first-apartment supplies—dishes and flatware, pots and pans, blankets, first-aid and tool kits.

The league awarded scholarships last year to 14 young adults planning to attend college. As part of Project R.E.A.D., volunteers read monthly to more than 1,000 second graders in the Mt. Diablo Unified School District and donated some 2,800 books to their classrooms and school libraries. The league also awarded teacher grants to Pittsburg Unified educators and to seven schools in Mt. Diablo Unified. Since 1993, the Buena Vista Auxiliary has funded 26,000 hours of tutoring for over 3,300 children in an early-intervention literacy program. Volunteers have also screened preschool children for vision and hearing problems. They have performed educational puppet shows for elementary students and musical revenues at senior care facilities. Funding for all these programs comes from the Assistance League Way Side Inn Thrift Shop in Lafayette and by grants and donations.

