



## **Pacific Palisades Community Council 2024 Awards Honorees**

Four dedicated Palisadians will be honored at the PPCC Holiday Dinner and Awards Celebration on December 12, 2024, at *Casa Nostra Ristorante* in the Palisades Highlands.

### **CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

#### **Cindi Young**

Cindi has been named “Citizen of the Year” for selflessly volunteering to continue the mission of the Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness (PPTFH). She stepped up to take on the extensive duties required of the co-President as of January 1, 2024, when no one else was willing to volunteer, thus rescuing this esteemed organization which has been so critical to ensuring the safety of the Palisades community and which would have otherwise ceased to exist.

Over the years, Cindy has devoted countless hours to volunteer efforts that benefited the community. She is a former President of the Castellammare Mesa HOA and remains an active member serving on the important Architecture and HOA Advisory Committees. She has served as Area One 1st Alternate on the PPCC board for the past two years, and represents PPCC on the Westside Regional Alliance of Councils Homelessness Committee. This year, she has worked tirelessly and devoted many hours to the appeal of the Tramonto development project, which is proposed to be built along a hillside in an active landslide area of the Castellammare neighborhood. When she is not on her computer working on all these projects, she can be found on the beach north of Sunset, engaging with new unhoused individuals, offering them services and cleaning up abandoned trash left by our unhoused neighbors on the beach and along the hillsides.

Cindi is truly a community hero for saving PPTFH and for all her volunteer efforts. She well-deserves Citizen of the Year honors.

### **GOLDEN SPARKPLUGS**

#### **Leslie Campbell**

Leslie is receiving the Golden Sparkplug award for her tireless, sustained advocacy and leadership in efforts to create and secure a much-needed dog park in Pacific Palisades. She devoted many hours of work over the course of ten years toward realizing this worthy goal, starting with efforts to explore obtaining a dog park in 2014, when she learned that a prior effort in the Palisades had failed. Undeterred, she continued relentlessly lobbying government officials and agencies, eventually obtaining the support of Councilwoman Traci Park.

As reported at PPCC, in 2017 the Dog Park Working group headed by Leslie began looking at dog parks and investigating sites in the Palisades; in 2018, she showed a petition she had earlier obtained containing over 3,000 signatures of Palisades dog park supporters; in 2019, she reported to PPCC that she had been working on the effort for 5 years and that during this time hundreds of residents came to meetings and signed petitions; in 2020, she again explained her efforts, assisted by her fellow Dog Park Working Group members; and in 2022, she strongly advocated for the dog park with then-CD 11 candidate Traci Park, continuing her lobbying efforts after the Councilwoman was elected. Leslie’s efforts culminated this year in finally securing

City approvals and confirmation from CD 11 of Measure A funding for the dog park to be located along Temescal Canyon Road.

The Palisades community is now assured that the dog park will move forward toward completion in the required City process. We are indebted to Leslie for her relentless and successful volunteer efforts to realize the long wished-for Palisades dog park.

### **Carlos Rodriguez**

Carlos is awarded Golden Sparkplug honors for his extensive volunteer work with the Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness (PPTFH) in clearing hundreds of abandoned encampments and safeguarding the bluff and canyon areas of the Palisades. He is a dedicated volunteer who has served with PPTFH since 2017. This year, Carlos was called on to clear a large, abandoned campsite in the El Medio hillside, hauling away all the rubbish to prevent fires and making sure no other unhoused individuals would set up camps in the wilderness near homes and Temescal Gateway Park. He also cleaned up several campsites in the Via de las Olas bluffs, where previous fires had been set, using his own personal truck to haul away debris. If this wasn't enough, this year on his own initiative he also replaced many broken and damaged "high fire hazard severity" signs in our hillside areas. When called on, he responds to all abandoned encampments that need cleaning by PPTFH volunteers and the LAPD Beach Detail with a smile, and always says "Yes, how can I help?"

Carlos' volunteer efforts have kept the community safe from fires and our environment pristine. This recognition is long overdue for his tremendous work as a true community steward of our hillsides.

## **PRIDE OF THE PALISADES**

### **Thomas Hathaway**

Thomas is being recognized with this special award for his extraordinary work for more than a decade in serving as CFO and Director of the Will Rogers 10K/5K Run Foundation and principal organizer of the Run on the 4th of July — "the Best Day of the Year" in the Palisades! Thomas has devoted countless volunteer hours over the past 13 years to the success of the Run, in which 3,000 runners/walkers participate annually. Each year, starting on July 5th, he spends 5-10 hours a week closing that year's event and preparing for the next year's event, including negotiating sponsorship deals, completing financial arrangements, paying bills, obtaining required City permissions, submitting filings and the like, and continues these efforts for the next several months, beginning again in March and ramping up work in April each year, when he spends 15-25 hours a week dealing with Los Angeles officials, insurance companies, sponsors, vendors, volunteers, etc. Notably, through extensive efforts he was able to obtain official USATF certification of both the 10K and the 5K Run (10K in 2012; 5K in 2015).

It's impossible in this limited space to describe all of Thomas' many duties required to make the Run happen each year; here is a brief summary: <https://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/PVVR-TH-Synopsis-1.pdf>.

Thomas is an unsung hero of the Palisades community for his amazing volunteer efforts to produce the successful Will Rogers 5K/10K Run, year after year, on the 4th of July. Pride of the Palisades honors are not awarded every year. It takes a special person like Thomas to earn this special recognition.