

Community Council 2025 Awards Honorees

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Jim Cragg. Jim is named Citizen of the Year for his visionary leadership in founding the Palisades Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG) and assistance with emergency relief to provide critical post-Palisades Fire support to vulnerable Palisadians, and for extensive voluntary service benefitting the community through his work with the American Legion Post 283, both before and after the Fire. Jim received Sparkplug honors in 2022 for spearheading Community Safety programs in the Palisades. After the fire, he has ensured that the Legion has remained open, offering a range of critical services to the community. We salute Jim for his dedicated service to the Country and Pacific Palisades!

GOLDEN SPARKPLUGS

Jessica Rogers. Jessica is receiving the Golden Sparkplug award for laser-focus on ensuring critical community security, by taking action to arrange for the installation of Flock license plate reader cameras at entry and exit points in the Palisades. She has long advocated for community safety and well-being, through her tireless work on the Pacific Palisades Residents Association and more recently with Jim Cragg as a leader of the Pali LTRG.

Maryam Zar. Maryam is awarded Golden Sparkplug honors for founding the Palisades Recovery Coalition, with programs such as the neighborhood “visioning charrettes,” and a series of community meetings with a range of public officials, to share information and build consensus to rebuild a stronger and safer community. We thank Maryam for her significant service to the Palisades, as President of PPCC (twice), of PPTFH and of the YMCA board.

PRIDE OF THE PALISADES

Chuck Hart. It takes a special person like Chuck to earn this recognition. He displayed exceptional heroism during the Palisades Fire, through his dedication and tireless work to save properties and help the community, and to secure safety by clearing streets and countless public and private areas in the immediate aftermath. A 4th generation Palisadian, he has devoted many years to the community he loves. We are proud to bestow Chuck with this honor.

Team Palisades. Several formidable Palisadians organized the remarkable Block Captain system after the Fire and have consistently provided key information, assistance and collaboration opportunities, as residents embark on rebuilding. Many thanks are due to Darragh Danton, Rob Jernigan, Elissa Ashwood, Tony Hocking, Lee Ann Daly, May Sung, Dennis Smith, Steve Danton, Jenny Weigle-Bonds, Allison Holdorff and Daphne Gronich (*recused in committee*) for their contributions, all worthy of this special recognition.

AWESOME ADVOCATES

Sue Pascoe. Sue is recognized with this special award for relentlessly pursuing important stories through her platform *Circling the News*, asking hard questions and informing readers about issues that matter most to the Palisades community, pre- and post-Fire. Her advocacy for the Palisades also includes many years of volunteering with the Homeless Task Force in clearing our bluff and canyon areas from encampments; serving as an announcer at the annual 4th of July Parade; refereeing countless AYSO and school soccer games; and stepping in Mrs. Claus’ shoes (shh, don’t tell the kids!) at the Holiday Ho Ho Ho every year.

Spencer Pratt. Spencer is worthy of recognition for his extraordinary use of new digital media after the Palisades Fire to bring nationwide attention to its unimaginable community impact, for highlighting residents’ suffering and the questions we are asking, and for persistence in seeking answers *and* assistance for disaster recovery. We are grateful that he has used his celebrity and social media presence to bring to light difficult and important issues that must be addressed for Pacific Palisades to recover fully from the catastrophe.

Additional Commendations and Thanks on p. 2, following.

Additional Commendations and Thanks in 2025

Commendations

Youth:

- **William Chapin** – for his actions the day after the Fire to save homes that were still burning; for obtaining jackets for fellow Eagle Scouts who had lost theirs in the Fire, and discount codes from outfitters so that Scouts could replace backpacking and camping gear; and for creating four outdoor chess tables now used at the Westchester YMCA – to be moved to Simon Meadow when the Lowe Family YMCA is open, for children and the community to learn and play chess.
- **Julia and Leo Wolfberg** – for their initiative “Cards for Kids,” in coordinating donations from local residents and a sports card shop, and then distributing gift bags containing sports memorabilia such as sports collection cards, Pokémon cards and even signed baseballs to scores of Palisades children who had lost homes and all their belongings in the Fire.

News:

- **Sarah Shmerling**, Editor-in-Chief, *Palisadian Post* – for many years of consistent and thorough coverage of PPCC actions and meetings; for efforts to ensure that the Pacific Palisades community was and continues to be informed of all local news; and for continuing support and devotion to the community in the aftermath of the Fire.

Community Thanks

- PPCC recognizes and expresses our heartfelt thanks for the countless Palisadians who, during this inconceivably difficult and unprecedented year, have worked to save lives and property, assisted neighbors and businesses, raised funds, disseminated information, formed support groups, organized events, and continue to take important actions to serve, support, renew, uplift, restore and rebuild our beloved Palisades community!