



PRESS RELEASE

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LA County Commission on Human Relations' 49th JAF Awards Honored Angelica Salas, AG Rob Bonta, and Five Outstanding Supervisorial District Awardees

**District awards for nonprofits' exceptional programs for Eaton Fire victims,
LGBTQ+ seniors in Long Beach, immigrants, Freedom School 'students,'
and people with disabilities.**

LOS ANGELES, CA — Today, human relations heroes were honored at the 49th John Anson Ford (JAF) Human Relations Awards in Downtown LA. This special event, hosted by the LA County Human Relations Commission, recognized exceptional leaders and programs that nurture positive intergroup relations and defend the human rights of diverse communities.

"Across Los Angeles County, and especially in the First District, we see the power of community not just to respond to challenges, but to transform lives," said **Los Angeles County Board Chair and First District Supervisor, Hilda L. Solis**. "This year's honorees are standing up for those too often overlooked, from working families to older adults, young people, and individuals with disabilities, and driving real change toward a more inclusive and just region. Their leadership strengthens our communities and shows that when we stand together, we build a brighter future for all."

"It is my pleasure to recognize The Freedom Schools of One LA-IAF as this year's Second District Human Relations Commission JAF Awardee. Their work bringing communities together is needed more than ever, as we continue to fight against ICE raids and other forms of violence and division. Through civic engagement and a commitment to community, The Freedom Schools of One LA-IAF is helping to build a village of justice advocates and empowering generations to come," said **Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell**.

"Congratulations to El Rescate and all of this year's honorees for their leadership in strengthening human relations across Los Angeles County," said **Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath**. "Through their work expanding civic participation and access to legal services, El Rescate is helping immigrant communities build trust, find opportunity, and forge a true sense of belonging."

“We are indebted to our LGBTQ elders for their vision, courage, and sacrifices. Yet today, many of them feel overlooked. With the Older Adult Services Program, the Long Beach LGBTQ Center is carving out spaces and offering up resources specifically for them. I’m grateful to the Center for that work, and to our LA County Human Relations Commission for recognizing it,” said **Supervisor Janice Hahn**.

“It is important that we take time to reflect and honor the individuals and organizations lifting up our communities in moments of greatest need,” said **Supervisor Kathryn Barger**. “The Long Term Recovery Group of the Eaton Fire Collaborative represents the very best of Los Angeles County: neighbors coming together with compassion and determination to help communities rebuild and heal. I commend their extraordinary leadership and commitment to ensuring every survivor has a path toward a full and equitable recovery.”

This year’s Yvonne B. Burke Courage Award was presented to Angelica Salas, the Executive Director of the Coalition for Humane Immigrants’ Rights (CHIRLA), for her decades-long labor in advancing human relations in the County by protecting immigrant families, challenging dehumanizing narratives, and building a sense of belonging across the region and nation. An immigrant from Durango, Mexico, who arrived in the United States as a child, Ms. Salas has transformed CHIRLA into an immigrant-led powerhouse that stands up for human rights, strengthens social cohesion, and confronts social exclusion. Ms. Salas had recently been honored by the Board of Supervisors and the Commission for CHIRLA’s role in federal litigation that halted mass violations of immigrants’ constitutional rights in LA County.

The John Allen Buggs Leadership Awardee was California Attorney General Rob Bonta, who demonstrated exceptional human relations leadership in public service. Amid an onslaught of federal actions driving fear, division, and harm, AG Bonta has led the California Department of Justice in defending LA County residents’ civil and human rights, public safety, and equal dignity. When federal actions militarized the National Guard’s deployment in LA, premised on manufactured crises, AG Bonta sued to reverse it. Under his leadership, California also sued to protect basic needs essential to healthy human relations, such as access to health care, gender affirming care for vulnerable youth, and food assistance.

“Amidst daily assaults on our civil and human rights that fuel division and fear, this year’s awards remind us of the extraordinary work that is being done by leaders and organizations throughout our communities,” said **Robin Toma, Executive Director of LA County Commission on Human Relations**. “We can be inspired by their stories, their efforts, so that we can be united, hopeful, and strong.”

Recognizing leadership supporting people who are too often overlooked and excluded, the Supervisorial District 1 awardee was the Disabled Individual Advocacy Program of Communities Actively Living Independent and Free.

For Supervisorial District 2, the Commission’s Human Relations Award was presented to The Freedom Schools of One LA-IAF, for bringing together people from communities of faith, schools, clinics and nonprofit organizations for practical civic education with culturally grounded engagement strategies, including scenario based roleplays and skits on how to effectively respond to challenges to their rights in homes, cars, and public spaces.

The Immigrant Civic Empowerment and Legal Access project of the nonprofit El Rescate assisted thousands of LA County residents to gain legal status, expand civic engagement, and build trust in public institutions, for which they were awarded the Human Relations Award for Supervisorial District 3.

This year's honoree for Supervisorial District 4 was the Older Adult Services program of The LGBTQ Center of Long Beach, which offers an array of fun, educational, and healthy activities in a safe, affirming, and inclusive space for LGBTQ+ older adults.

For Supervisorial District 5, the Commission's Human Relations Award was presented to The Long-Term Recovery Group of the Eaton Fire Collaborative, which has used cooperation and communication to support an equitable, survivor-centered, and locally driven process to ensure every affected community member can fully recover from their devastating losses in last year's Eaton Fire.

For more information about LA County's Commission on Human Relations, click [here](#).

About the LA County Commission on Human Relations

The [Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations](#) is dedicated to securing human rights to strengthen healthy relations throughout our richly diverse, multicultural county, encompassing all five Supervisorial Districts. The Commission works to develop programs that proactively address racism, homophobia, religious prejudice, linguistic bias, anti-immigrant sentiment, and other divisive attitudes that can lead to intercultural tension, hate crimes, and related violence.

About the Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors

The LA County Commission on Human Relations is housed within the Executive Office of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. [The Executive Office](#) provides a multi-functional support role for the Board of Supervisors in administering and managing technology, staffing, procurement, and facilities resources, as well as the publication of information for the Board, various County departments, and the public. The Executive Office also administers and oversees over 30 County commissions and offices, and its mission is to provide excellent customer service and support the Board in achieving its objectives.

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