

# Los Altans honored for stand against violence and hate

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Stories of violence and hate in Los Altos don't typically dominate the news pages, but those were the key elements that brought two Los Altos residents together in front of the media last week.

Dr. Ashraf Zahedi and Judge Eugene Hyman were among the honorees at the Santa Clara County Human Rights Commission awards banquet at the Wyndham Hotel last Thursday. Zahedi and Hyman received special awards acknowledging their outstanding contributions in eliminating prejudice and discrimination in Santa Clara County and for promoting peace in the community. The annual event pays tribute to people for their outstanding service to the community in the area of human rights. This is the 29th year of the commission's existence.

Hyman was honored for his fight against juvenile domestic violence, and Zahedi for her courage to stop hate crimes.

Zahedi received the Commission Chair's Award for her commitment to building peace and understanding among diverse communities in the county. Liz Kniss, Santa Clara county supervisor, praised Zahedi's personal dedication and service to the community, saying, "Dr. Zahedi has served as an inspiration for the creation of the Santa Clara County Network for a Hate-Free Community." Zahedi, former chairperson of the commission, is originally from Iran. She is a professor of sociology at Santa Clara University and has been the guiding force behind the network.

Through her leadership, the network has worked to build peace in the community and respond to hate crimes.

Hyman received the Director's Award in recognition of his efforts in advocating the rights of special protected groups of people in the community. Working toward fighting juvenile domestic violence, Hyman has devoted his personal time to teaching local judges and community leaders about his early intervention approach. Hyman founded the Juvenile Domestic Family Violence Project for Santa Clara County. He also teaches at the University of Santa Clara School of Law and serves on the Domestic Violence Council, which examines issues relating to domestic violence, and makes recommendations on administrative and legislation issues. Kniss said that Hyman "has worked tirelessly in fighting juvenile domestic violence."

The Human Relations Commission was founded in 1972 as an advisory body to the County Board of Supervisors. Comprising 15 members appointed by the Board of Supervisors to represent the citizens of the county, the commission identifies issues of community concern and recommends solutions to the board. Its activities include the Conference on Creating a Hate-Free Community, Unity in Diversity Day, the Summit on Immigrant Needs, and community mediation services.

Rigo Chacon, South Bay bureau chief of KGO TV, Channel 11 acted as master of ceremonies for the evening. He was also one of some 39 individuals honored for "planting the seeds of peace" in Santa Clara County. In his opening remarks, Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors chairperson James T. Beall paid tribute to special honoree Jim McEntee for his 25 years of dedicated service as director of the Office of Human Relations. Beall expressed the hope that "by working together and supporting each other, we can and will make our county a community of peace and understanding."