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NEWS RELEASE

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Multnomah County Health Department announces 2010 Public Health Heroes

Multnomah County Health Department's tenth annual Public Health Heroes award celebration recognizes the contributions that community members make through their work or volunteerism to protect and promote the health of all of us in Multnomah County.

The ceremony will be held:

**Thursday, April 8, 2010
11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd.
First floor Board Room
Portland, Oregon 97214**

Public Health Hero awards are given in six categories (listed with winners on page two and three), three of which have been named for individuals who have made outstanding contributions to public health. Multnomah County established the **Josiah Hill Community Leadership Award** to honor his legacy as a powerful and dedicated champion in the fight for social, racial, health, and environmental justice. The **Governor John Kitzhaber Public Health Leadership Award** honors those in our community who have worked unceasingly to create policy solutions that assure, promote, and protect health for every member of the community. The **Katharine Jeans-Gail Award for Youth Heroes** memorializes a young woman who was a champion for public health. She worked both locally and internationally to assure that the most vulnerable in our world could be healthy.

"The public health system's ability to serve the working poor, uninsured, and medically under-served depends on the commitment of an extensive network of community organizations and individuals, or 'Public Health Heroes.' We're honoring those who work to make Multnomah County a healthier place to live," states Health Department director Lillian Shirley.

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2010 Public Health Heroes



Josiah Hill Community Leadership Award:

S. Renee Mitchell – S. Renee Mitchell is a Pulitzer Prize-nominated former newspaper columnist, poet, playwright, teacher and small business owner and speaks passionately against verbal, sexual and physical violence. Since leaving her career as an award-winning journalist, Renee has been on the ground serving her community by healing and empowering women through poetry, plays, writing workshops and spoken word presentations to a variety of audiences, from low-income teenage girls to professional women to Rotary Club members, in order to help raise awareness and encourage others to start talking about their experiences. A domestic and sexual violence survivor herself, Renee co-founded the Healing Roots Center, a four-year-old referral center for black women who are experiencing domestic violence. She co-chairs the center’s advisory committee and has helped raised thousands of dollars to support outreach and awareness campaigns.



Katie Jeans – Gail Award for Young Heroes:

Multnomah Youth Commission - The Multnomah Youth Commission (MYC), the official youth policy body for both Multnomah County and the City of Portland, is a group of young people, ages 13-21, that strives to provide a voice for youth in the County and City's work. In 2006, the MYC created Our Bill of Right: Children + Youth, the nation’s first Bill of Rights written by and for youth and adopted by local government as official policy which gives the youth of Multnomah County the right to access appropriate physical, mental and spiritual wellness. The MYC also developed the YouthPass program which expanded in 2009 and provided free Trimet passes to all high school students in the Portland Public School district. The MYC continuously works to change policy affecting young people and is committed to expanding access to school-based health care for young people and engaging the delivery of health services and promotion as well as increasing access to public transportation for youth.



Community-Based Organization or Program Award:

Coalition for a Livable Future – Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF) unites 100 diverse organizations to promote health and wellness in the Portland-Vancouver region by working to improve physical and social environments at a systemic level so that exposure to health risks decline, making it easier for individuals to adopt healthier behaviors in the future. Through research, policy advocacy and public education, CLF works to create and preserve affordable housing; ensure clean water; protect open space, wildlife habitat and farmland; create living wage jobs; provide real transportation choices; and end hunger in our community. CLF has a 15-year track record of public policy wins and community building and strives to promote “regionalism”, which recognizes that the community within our urban area is interdependent and that cooperation will improve the economic, social and environmental health of the metropolitan region as a whole.



John Kitzhaber Public Health Leadership Award:

Renee Hackenmiller-Paradis - Renee Hackenmiller-Paradis is the Environmental Health Program Director at the Oregon Environmental Council and works to unite health professionals and environmental advocates in developing and promoting policies to protect children’s health from toxic pollution. She works tirelessly to reduce sources of exposure by educating decision-makers and citizens about the costs of contaminants; organizing Healthy Environment Forum series; and rallying support behind policies such as fitting diesel school buses with filters and instituting safer pest management policies in schools. In 2009, Renee championed the “Children’s Safe Products Act” which included a bill that tackled Bisphenol A (BPA). She created a successful campaign that put pressure on lawmakers and manufacturers to find solutions to reduce children’s exposure to this dangerous chemical, opening the door to further discussion with businesses and health care providers.

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Business/Corporation Award:

OMSI – OMSI’s mission to make science accessible and meaningful through exhibits, programs and hands-on experiences to all community members has recently focused on ensuring public health work is front and center in their community-based work. Beginning in 2007, OMSI has collaborated with the Multnomah County Health Department through the SciencePub Program in bringing important public health topics to the community. This collaboration began on the subject of the pandemic influenza far before anyone was concerned about the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus. This continued with hosting community panels on H1N1 and this year, OMSI chose a public health book entitled, “The Ghost Map” to encourage a community dialogue about public health through partnerships with the Multnomah County Library and the Health Department



Multnomah County Employee Award:

Susan Kirchoff – Susan Kirchoff is responsible for overseeing the operations at the Department’s health centers where approximately 60,000 Multnomah County residents, representing the county’s most vulnerable communities, depend on high quality care delivered at these sites. Susan is the architect of the Building Better Care model, which promotes a patient-centered approach to health care services. She has led the campaign for significant improvements to the health center program with funding provided by the county and through the 2009 Recovery Act. Her leadership in the county’s dental program has led to an increase in access by at least 9% per year for the past 2 years. Susan is a champion for assuring that every client has a high quality experience with the county’s primary care services by identifying and removing barriers to care so that clients can have strong personal relationships with their care team.

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