

OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

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SUBJECT: 2014 Innovation Recognition Awards – The “Inny” Awards

Dear Board Members,

RECOMMENDATION:

Award Recommended Winner, Runner-up and Honorable Mention Categories for 2014 “Inny Awards”

SUMMARY:

Embracing and encouraging innovation is a focused strategy of your Board as the County tries to keep pace with a rapidly changing environment and community. Today we are recommending to your Board the winners of the County’s 2014 Innovation Recognition Awards (the “Innys”). Winners will be presented with crystal trophies to memorialize their achievements.

Modeled after the California State Association of Counties’ (CSAC) Challenge Awards, the County’s “Inny” awards program is intended to enhance employee engagement and recognition and build momentum toward additional efforts to innovate as an adaptation to our challenging economic reality. The Marin Community Foundation generously provided grant funding to seed the Inny Awards and other innovation strategies to help create a “County of Marininnovation.”

Ten project applications from eight departments were received, including the Assessor-Recorder; Cultural Services; District Attorney; Fire; Health & Human Services; Human Resources; Information Services & Technology; and the Marin County Employees Retirement Association. Each department should be commended for their innovative efforts, which made for a spirited discussion and evaluation among the judges.

The judges included graduates of the Spring 2012 Dominican Leadership Academy who completed a capstone project on ‘creating a culture of innovation’ at the County of Marin. They included Mark Brown, County Fire; Tracy Clay, Public Works; Martin Graff, HHS; Jerod Kansanback, Sheriff; William Kelley, CDA; Chris Mai, HHS; Marina Raskin, IST; and Dan Eilerman, CAO.

Judges looked for projects that were inventive, replicable, and represented new and effective ways of providing services to our residents or across our County

departments. Entries included initiatives that utilized technology, as well as those that were not of a technical nature. All entries provided examples of employees or departments willing to look at long-standing problems in new and different ways to achieve better results. Choosing a winner and a runner-up among the group was challenging but also inspiring.

Winner

It is recommended that the District Attorney's Office receive the 2014 Inny Award for its Jeanette Prandi Children's Center Educational Film Production project. Please see Attachment A for a full description of the project.

The Jeannette Prandi Children's Center (JPCC) is a child friendly environment used for interviewing minors who have been victims of, or witnesses to, crime in Marin County. In 2010, the center observed an increase in interviews of young women who had been the victims of sexual assault. In many cases, the victims only knew their assailant through the Internet and had agreed to meet them in person.

The District Attorney's Office, in partnership with the JPCC, started a program of producing short educational films to address these social media issues - including a 2010 film called "Irreversible Consequences" on sexting and a 2013 film called "Malicious Intent" on cyber-bullying. The films are used as part of an outreach program to address the dangerous side of social media technologies available at the fingertips of our young people. Students see the films and are then guided through a discussion on that topic allowing them to share their concerns, experiences, and solutions to the issues.

Using County staff and residents volunteering their time, the effort included actors from San Marin High School in Novato and several Marin entertainment industry professionals who donated their time and experience. The two films have been seen by over 5,000 Marin County youth in high schools and middle schools. In demonstration of its reach and effect, in 2012 JPCC executive Director Dr. Michael Grogan was invited to screen the film "Irreversible Consequences" to the International Family & Child Maltreatment Conference held annually in San Diego. The films have also been previewed at several California District Attorneys Association annual meetings.

This project represents a proactive, collaborative effort to target difficult problems among the County's youth, including sexting, cyber-bullying and other social media problems, at minimal cost and for an impactful gain.

Runner-Up

It is recommended that the Runner-Up Award go to Health & Human Services, a repeat winner from 2013. This year's project, *The HHS Insider: Changing Organization Culture*, is an innovative new communications and team-building project. This unique e-newsletter is part of the department's effort to change its organizational culture by breaking down silos, embracing collaboration, and

celebrating individual diversity and commitment. See Attachment B for its full project description.

With four divisions, over 60 programs and 600 plus employees, internal communication is an ongoing challenge for the Department. Many employees are not aware of the breadth of services that are provided, yet remain curious about other programs. Many sometimes feel isolated within a particular program and are challenged to understand how it all connects under the mission and umbrella of the Department.

The newsletter, with an employee (not management) voice, highlights individual programs so that HHS employees get “man on the street” information about programs and are able to refer clients. The newsletter also promotes the value of interdependence by demonstrating HHS/County collaboration and connecting HHS to the County by highlighting County initiatives. The project highlights and celebrates employees through the “I am HHS” feature, offering a window into who the department’s employees are and why they chose health and social services. The newsletter also involves innovative approaches such as video storytelling and archiving on an internal website where other employees can comment on the stories.

This project is another proactive, innovative approach toward providing content, fostering a sense of community and pride in the organization, and building relationships. One employee even described how he took the article home and showed it to his parents who posted it on the fridge - and felt that he finally could explain where he worked.

Honorable Mention

We are also recommending honorable mention to the Department of Human Resources for its Leadership Academy project. See Attachment C for its full project description.

The Leadership Academy – a collaboration with Dominican University of California – is an eleven session, accredited program that assists participants in building their leadership skills and increasing their capacity for leadership throughout the County. Participants are assigned to project groups at the beginning of the program and are responsible for leading change within their spheres of influence. Through coordination with coaches, executive sponsors and County executives, teams contribute to the organization during and after graduation by recommending and implementing sustainable systems that address opportunities for development within the organization.

Three classes have graduated from the program thus far (Spring 2012, Fall 2012, and Fall 2013). Plans for the Fall 2014 Academy are well underway. Since its induction, over 205 County employees have applied to participate, and 90 employees have graduated from the program. The Leadership Program Design Team was formally commended as Team of the Quarter (March 2014).

This project represents an innovative collaboration between local government and academia to build a new generation of leaders at all levels of the County organization. The leadership program has been particularly unique in its inclusion of "leaders at large" – developing leaders across the county who are not yet in formal leadership positions. Further, the cross-departmental efforts of class participants working together on projects that benefit the countywide organization represent concrete returns on investment through initiatives that are enriching our capacity to provide service to our community.

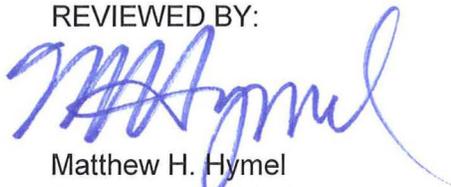
If creativity is thinking of a new idea, innovation is making a new idea happen. All of these projects showcase the talents of our County workforce combined with a strong commitment to excellence in public service. While not all submissions can be formally recognized with awards, all those departments which submitted entries are to be commended for their support and demonstration of innovation at the County of Marin. The judges hope that your board will be as inspired as we have been by the remarkable accomplishments of our County colleagues.

SUBMITTED BY:



Daniel Eilerman
Deputy County Administrator

REVIEWED BY:



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County Administrator

Cc: Edward Berberian, District Attorney
Larry Meredith, Ph.D., Director of Health & Human Services
Joanne Peterson, Director, Human Resources

Innovation Team/Judges: Mark Brown, County Fire; Tracy Clay, Public Works; Daniel Eilerman, CAO; Martin Graff, HHS Social Services; Jerod Kansanback, Sheriff; William Kelley, CDA; Chris Mai, HHS Social Services; and Marina Raskin, IST