

Human Rights Award Winners Named

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The Fairfax County Human Rights Commission has announced the recipients of its 30th annual Human Rights Awards.

Awards will be presented to:

Gerald Poje: Poje will be honored for his leadership in the effort to end homelessness.

Poje has played a key role in a number of organizations including the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, Fairfax Area Christian Emergency and Transitional Services and Faith Communities United for Housing. He has mentored a number of individuals who have benefited from these organizations and now are active members in the community.

Classic Tales 'n Tunes LLC: Created in 2002 by Jody Katz, Tales 'n Tunes LLC is a dynamic and innovative program for children that teaches communication skills that emphasize inclusiveness, tolerance and group learning with the intention of removing the seeds of discrimination before they can take root.

More than 300 children and 200 adults participate in each quarterly session, adding up to about 1,000 individuals per year, in various community centers, preschools and child development centers throughout Fairfax County.

Vienna Presbyterian Church English for Speakers of Other Languages Program (ESOL): Since 2006, the Vienna Presbyterian Church ESOL Program has provided English language classes to adults from 60 different countries.

The church offers flexible class schedules, multiple instructors per class, access to tutors and mentors, and free child care during class time. Additional classes in writing, conversation, U.S. citizenship test preparation and computer skills are also offered.

The program successfully completed a U.S. Labor Department "Employment Access through Partnerships and Community Collaboration" grant.

The church also continues also to maintain a collaborative relationship with Northern Virginia Community College and has sponsored several ESOL students by scholarship.

Wilton Dickerson: Wilton Dickerson will be honored with the Virginia Peters Human Rights Award.

Dickerson has championed the improvement of social and racial equality in Fairfax County for the past 50 years. He has led a number of organizations that have helped shape many current county housing policies, including public housing and community development initiatives, such as home ownership programs, elderly housing, home improvement loans, home repair for qualified elderly and disabled, bond financing of affordable housing, administration of the HOME and Community Development Block Grant fund to local nonprofit housing organizations, as well as neighborhood and commercial revitalization efforts.

The awards will be presented at a reception of May 6 at 6:30 p.m. at the Fairfax County Government Center. The featured speaker will be Del. Vivian Watts, who has served as a member of the House of Delegates since 1996.

The Human Rights Commission was established in 1974 by the Board of Supervisors.