

**Contact:**  
Rick Kitson  
Public Information Officer



(408) 777-3262  
(408) 777-3366 (fax)  
rickk@cupertino.org

## NEWS RELEASE

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### City Recognizes Community Volunteers

Seven individuals and one group, who have made outstanding contributions to the city of Cupertino will receive the 2004 CREST Award at a ceremony planned Wednesday, May 19, in the Cupertino City Council Chambers, 10300 Torre Avenue.

This annual event, sponsored by the city of Cupertino, takes place at 7 p.m. and is open to the public. CREST stands for Cupertino Recognizes Extra Steps Taken. This year's recipients are:

**Donna M. Austin**, for her activism and membership in a wide variety of community organizations. Along with serving as president of the Cupertino Historical Society for the last three years, Donna has been an active member of the Cupertino chapter of Quota International. Donna is also a leader in her Neighborhood Watch Program, garnering nearly 100% participation among neighbors. She was recently appointed to the Board of the Portuguese Historical Museum at Kelley Park in San Jose.

**Jack Birkholz**, for the extra steps he has taken to help the Cupertino community by volunteering his time since his retirement 15 years ago. Jack has been an active volunteer at the RoadRunners and Lifeline Service to help people with no means of transportation. He has also been Chair of the Saint Joseph of Cupertino Parish Annual Appeal to raise fund for the betterment of the community. On top of his numerous other commitments, Jack helps distribute food baskets for the St. Joseph of Cupertino Parish and Cupertino Community Services.

**Cupertino Amateur Radio Emergency Services (CARES)**, provides one of the most valuable services in our community. In the event of a local emergency or disaster, the volunteers at CARES provide a reliable communication link to other communities and services. CARES volunteers have spent the last 18 years planning and training. With no compensation, these professional communicators give their time and equipment to make Cupertino a safer place to live. When there are no emergencies, they offer their expertise on evenings and weekends to community groups for parades and events as well as providing support to city staff. CARES is an invaluable part of Cupertino's disaster response and will ensure that the city will have open channels of communication, no matter the situation.

**Barbara Hill**, is the heart and soul of the family volunteer program at St. Joseph of Cupertino School. Because of her welcoming spirit, unflagging enthusiasm and amazing dedication, the church's volunteer program is vibrant and continues to be a strong support for the school program. Barbara is always visible and sets an example for all volunteers due to her hard work and dedication. She coordinates every school special event, fundraiser, after school program and volunteer activity. Barbara works her magic with students and parents regardless of their background. She is a remarkable person who never hesitates to take on additional volunteer work.

**Hema Alur-Kundargi**, has enriched Cupertino by actively integrating, and advocating for, the Indian community. Hema has also been a tireless promoter of Indian culture. She has numerous awards from her cooking show "Indian Vegetarian Gourmet." She demonstrates simple and quick vegetarian recipes, sprinkled with anecdotes of her childhood in India and cultural adaptations after coming to the U.S. Additionally, Hema has coordinated cultural festivals including a Saree show at the Cupertino Library and Indian folk dance festivals. In 2003, she coordinated the cultural program for "Diwali, the Indian Festival of Lights," hosted by the Cupertino Chamber of Commerce. Hema is also a member of the Cupertino Fine Arts Commission and is a regular contributor to the Cupertino Scene.

**Monsignor Joseph Milani**, is a people person by nature. Since his retirement eight years ago, Msgr. Milani has continued to be an active part of a very diverse community consisting of people of all ages and races, rich and poor. His retirement has not diminished his involvement in the defining moments of individuals, families and communities. He has brought meaning and inspiration to moments of greatest sorrow and greatest joy. His vision and humanity have helped his parish and community embrace the many profound changes that have come over the years.

**Mahesh Nihalani**, is an active and prolific citizen of Cupertino. He strives to bring various facets of our community together and has been actively volunteering in various areas of community development. Mahesh's activities range from the Cupertino Housing Commission and General Plan Task Force to membership in Philanthropic Relief Altruistic Service & Development (PRASAD). He has also been an active fundraiser for the Cupertino Library Campaign that is raising money to complete the new Cupertino Library in October 2004. Mahesh is not only active in his community, he is also active in his neighborhood. As a volunteer block leader, he has organized several activities to increase neighborhood involvement.

**Laverne Swanson**, has been active in the Sunnyview Manor Auxiliary for 20 years. She is an amazing upbeat person who along with many other duties, is in charge of the store at the manor. Keeping the books, stocking the store shelves has not kept Laverne from helping in many other ways, large and small. Laverne is an important part of so many peoples lives, whether it is a trip to the salon or a visit to the hospital. Her kindness and energy may turn up as elegant gestures of thoughtfulness, or help packing boxes to move. She is giving of her time, energy and love, and an inspiration to all who know her.

Members of the public are welcome to help recognize these people and organizations that have made major contributions to the quality of life in Cupertino. Presentations will be made in the Cupertino City Council Chambers on Wednesday, May 19, at 7 p.m. Reception begins at 8 p.m. For information call 408.777.3200.

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City Hall, 10300 Torre Avenue, Cupertino, California 95014