

Many centuries ago a famous teacher climbed up on a big hill and this was part of his sermon: "Blessed are the Peacemakers." Who are today's peacemakers, and why do we need them?

Some years ago a tragic and senseless murder in Eureka triggered angst and outrage among ~~some~~ clergy who formed the nucleus of the Eureka Interfaith Fellowship. ~~The result, they~~ decided to develop, and host, an award for those who have made peace in our community rather than highlighting so many who make mayhem. ~~So,~~ In 1996 the first Humboldt Peacemaker Prize went to a man named Yer Thao, who worked diligently among Eureka's gangs to alleviate violence. ~~Yes, there were, and still are some gangs up here, but they have not seemed to gain a foothold like in other communities. Thanks in part to Yer Thao.~~

In 1998 the Peace Prize recipient was Art Eliazeras.

In 2000 Chris Evans, a local counselor, at the time working w/ Catholic Charities, was the recipient.

In 2002 Betty Chinn and Rose Baker were co-recipients of the Peacemaker Prize. Rose has harbored hundreds of foster children and continues to do so to the present day. Betty Chinn has fed thousands of hungry people and has since been recognized by the State of California's Minerva Award, the Republic of China, the government of Hong Kong, and by President Barak Obama at the White House. ~~The shift in non-support of Betty's ministry, to very strong support over the past 14 years could hardly be more dramatic.~~

In 2004 the award was given to Russ Shaddix, who has worked tirelessly to support the ministry of St. Vincent de Paul.

In 2006 the award was given to Simona Keat, who worked with youth and children who had special needs in our school system. ^{at risk}

In 2008 the Peace Prize was awarded to Dr. Sam Oliner, former professor at Humboldt State University who has authored many books on form of compassionate human behavior known as altruism.

In 2011 the Peace Prize was awarded to John Shelter, who perhaps as his name forecasts, has helped many in our area find adequate housing.

In 2014 the Prize was awarded to Byrd Lochtie, who has made peace by a lifestyle of humble service, mediation, and remarkable inclusion in her family and professional life. ^{DATA}

The names of these people should be held in high esteem, and honored by all in our community.

I mention them because the Humboldt County Peacemaker Prize will also be awarded in spring of 2016 and the ceremony will be held at the First Presbyterian Church of Eureka May 22nd. Nominations are still open for the Prize and are due by March 1st. If you would like to nominate someone, please get the application in by March 1st; if you need an application call 443 4897 and ask for one by mail, or come by to pick it up in person at the First Presbyterian Church of Eureka, at the corner of 14th and J streets. Or e-mail me and I'll send you one as an attachment: dprice2345@aol.com.

"Blessed are the Peacemakers," so said Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount, c. 2,000 years ago. This has been Dan Price for Community Comment. ^{founder of Interfaith} ^{also got the Peace of Peace} ^{PAUSE}