

Union County Human Relations Commission

Our mission is to actively encourage, develop, promote and strengthen respect for human rights and cultural diversity among the people of Union County.

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and
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UCHRC Award Recipients 2002 through 2017

.....Achievement by a Corporation.....

- 2016 Gina Pachkowski / Alluem Yoga -- Recognition for honoring the light in her own backyard, and spreading that light through the world
- 2015 Pinho's Bakery / Raul and Julia Pinho -- Recognition for showering the world with incredible sweetness, compassion and generosity
- 2014 Yo-Delight Frozen Yogurt (Springfield) -- Recognition for providing goods -- and most importantly community service -- to support women undergoing serious health treatments
- 2013 Dairy Queen of Plainfield (Richard and Donna Albanese-DeMair) -- Recognition for steadfastly and wholeheartedly uniting, inspiring, improving -- and saving -- lives
- 2012 Clyne & Murphy, Westfield / Jen and Steve Quaranta, Owners -- Recognition for continued years of hard work, compassion, kindness and community service which demonstrates how wonderful our world can be when we each do what we can do to help our fellow man
- 2011 AGL Resources / Elizabethtown Gas Company -- Tim Williams -- Recognition for developing a program for students and at-risk youth to learn valuable lessons today that can earn them a better future
- 2009 Trinitas Regional Medical Center / Gary S. Horan, FACHE, President & Chief Executive Officer -- Recognition for its proactive outreach to the communities it serves outside its walls, and its standards of excellence for personal medical care within
- 2008 Merck & Co., Inc. / Rick Davis, Gail Driscoll -- Recognition for responding to improve the quality of life around the world and in our own backyard, especially on behalf of children and the disadvantaged
- 2007 ConocoPhillips Bayway Refinery -- Recognition for demonstrating an ongoing sensitivity and concern for those in need in our community
- 2006 Union Center National Bank -- Recognition for a corporate philosophy and environment that encourages officers of the bank to be extremely involved in the community, and for the fulfillment of that pledge
- 2005 The Elm Street Café, Westfield -- Recognition for generously providing the facilities and services of her business to reach out to those who might not have otherwise had the opportunity to share a traditional holiday meal
- 2004 RexPlex of Elizabeth -- Generously providing facilities and services to support Union County youth
- 2003 Hillside Auto Mall -- Recognition for providing mentoring and employment opportunities in the private sector for at-risk youth
- 2002 Wakefern Corporation -- Recognition for providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities through the Supermarket Careers Partnership Program

.....Achievement by a Non-Profit Organization.....

- 2017 Imagine, Inc., A Center for Coping with Loss -- Recognition for lovingly transforming loss and vulnerability into resilience, empathy, compassion, and strength
- 2017 American Muslims for Hunger Relief -- Recognition for a widespread volunteer effort to eradicate hunger, creating a positive impact through compassion and generosity on those whose lives they touch

2016 The Paul Jackson Fund, Inc. -- Recognition for finding a balance in crisis, and providing hope where there was no hope. Honoring Founder Paul Jackson (1961-2009)

2015 Roots And Wings -- Recognition for finding and addressing an extraordinary need in our society to look out for some of our forgotten young people

2014 The Birthday Box/ Stacy Bergerman & Jennifer Wilner-- Recognition for finding an extraordinary need in our society and addressing it, while creating precious moments and happy memories for the children served

2013 Cherished Creations (Richard Martell, Executive Director) -- Recognition for filling an important and significant gap in the "wish department" for children and young adults

2012 Raphael's Life House (Covenant House) / Edith Coogan -- Recognition for recognizing the horrific circumstances faced by homeless moms and their newborns, and providing them with a safe "today" and a chance for a brighter "tomorrow"

2011 Lin's Linens / Liz Belogh and Lin Salerno -- Recognition for harnessing and illuminating the value and power of brightness, serenity, peace and healing in our physical world through our simple and spiritual human connections

2010 Restore Ministries / Linwood Bagby, Executive Director - Recognition for taking the time to connect, intervene and inspire the priceless lives of at-risk urban youth, reclaiming them, one at a time, for a brighter tomorrow

2009 Groundwork Elizabeth / Jonathan Phillips, Executive Director - Recognition for creating beauty from wasteland to inspire personal greatness while demonstrating that the sum of all the parts is always greater than the whole

2008 Bridgeway Rehabilitation Services, Inc. -- Recognition for providing extraordinary, personal care and support, and, most importantly, hope, to individuals who experience mental illness

2007 Newborns in Need / Plainfield Chapter -- Recognition for finding an extraordinary need in our society and addressing it

2006 The Volunteers of the Center for Hope Hospice & Palliative Care – Recognition for providing physical, emotional and spiritual support as important decisions are made concerning how patients live each day

2005 Community FoodBank of New Jersey / Hillside – Recognition for continuously serving Union County's needy, for excellence in creative volunteerism that serves the volunteers as well as the recipients, and for establishing innovative programs and services that address hunger, poverty and essential human needs

2004 PROCEED (Puerto Rican Organization for Community Education & Economic Development) – Recognition for providing individuals and families with a comprehensive network of supportive and preventative health and human services

2003 Occupational Center of Union County for the Homeless – Recognition for providing a unique combination of vocational, employment, mental health and educational services to individuals with disabilities which advocate removing barriers to employment and fostering community integration

2002 Volunteers of the Interfaith Council – Recognition for a broad-based collaborative effort by volunteers that provides comprehensive programs that improve the quality of life for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness – especially children; that promote personal development, independence and self-sufficiency; and bring the community together to create safe and stable neighborhoods

.....**Achievement by a Community Organization**.....

2017 Missions Possible of New Jersey/Robin Johnstone and Melina Thompson, Founders -- Recognition for doing small things with great love to make a big difference in children's lives

2017 Mobile Meals of Westfield -- Recognition for providing a crucial community service with priceless dedication, and heart

2016 The Unique Divazz -- Recognition for a creative and fun approach to serve the community, especially those in need

2015 **Prevention Links** -- Recognition for vision and steadfast dedication to at-risk populations for substance abuse

2014 **Young Men of Resilience/Sarah Cherry-Cadogan, President and Founder** -- Recognition for converting the tragedy of one bright light snuffed out too soon into future opportunities and possibilities for others

2013 **The Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless** -- Recognition for identifying a segment of our population in need of advocacy -- the homeless, helping them make the journey to a better -- and hopeful -- tomorrow

2012 **The Relief Bus / Juan Galloway, President** -- Recognition for providing substance and personal assistance to those in need transforming their homelessness into opportunity and hopefulness

2011 **Furniture Assist / Dawson Yeomans** -- Recognition for carving a unique niche to provide hope and a home to those they serve, while also generating ripples of hope, satisfaction and service to those who help them make it happen

2010 **CONTACT We Care / David Owens, Executive Director** - Recognition for eternally and non-judgmentally providing an ear to listen, a hand to help, and the offer of hope and light to those in need in their darkest moments

2009 **Josephine's Place / Sister Judith Mertz, Director** - Recognition for providing a warm, welcoming, hospitable, and caring space for women of all backgrounds which respects and responds to their physical, mental, emotional and educational needs

2008 **Cranford Family Care Association / Kathy Willis** -- Recognition for gracious and meaningful outreach to neighbors demonstrating true understanding of what it is to CARE.

**Recipient of the 2008 Award for Achievement by a Community Organization
presented in 2007 by the New Jersey Human Relations Council**

2007 **St. Clare's Home for Children** -- Recognition for initially recognizing a unique need for medical services for HIV-infected children and babies, and ultimately addressing a more profound need for a unique range of services

2006 **Plainfield Public Library** -- Recognition for providing an enlightened library collection and program responsive to the needs of the changing communities it serves, with equal access to information resources, technologies and programs for a lifetime of learning and cultural enrichment by promoting literacy, preserving the history of the community, and serving as a community center

2005 **YWCA of Eastern Union County** -- Recognition for providing a spectrum of social services meeting the special needs of those in Eastern Union County, and their dynamic responsiveness to address community needs.

2004 **St. Joseph's Social Service Center / Sister Jacinta Fernandes** -- Providing a community that unites city and suburb, poor and affluent, young and old, and people of all colors

2003 **Muslim Community Soup Kitchen**

2003 **Omega Psi Phi**

2003 **First Baptist Church of Elizabeth /Elmora Presbyterian Church**

-- Recognition for providing volunteer-staffed soup kitchen services to their community's needy, supplemented by a variety of other support services that are frequently required by their clients, and the positive impact and impressions their compassion has had on some of the lives they have touched.

2002 **Elizabeth Public Library -- Director Joseph Keenan** -- Recognition for providing a variety of materials, resources, programs and special events to the community that focus on exploring, understanding and appreciating cultural heritage

.....**Achievement by an Individual**.....

- 2017 Terri Todd, Founder, Executive Director of The F.A.B. Coalition** -- Recognition for providing a safety net for teenagers to creatively express themselves while building self-esteem, mutual respect, and life skills
- 2016 Union County Spectrum All Stars / Lori Gonzalez and Joann Fruciano** -- Recognition for paving the way to provide relaxation, resources, respite -- and acceptance
- 2015 Maureen O'Brien, Esq.** -- Recognition for navigating uncharted waters to humanize those lost in the system and then teaching others how to do the same
- 2014 Lisa Petrillo** -- Recognition for identifying a means to harness and illuminate the value of brightness, sweetness, and social support to aid in our health and healing
- 2013 Karen Hall** -- Recognition for traveling the road less traveled, providing a safe haven for youth who need it most
- 2012 Richard A. Davis** -- Recognition for immeasurable years of selfless, tireless, dependable and dedicated volunteer service to improve the quality of life for others in the local, county and state community
- 2011 Lillie Brown** -- Recognition for dedicating her entire life to selfless giving, fellowship and service to improve the quality -- and spirit -- of life for others
- 2010 Rosa Floyd** -- Recognition for a lifetime of love, caring and food baskets that has inspired a community and a family for the past four decades, and a whole future to come
- 2009 Shade Lee** -- Recognition for his role as a trailblazer and torch-bearer in his service in World War II as one of the original Tuskegee Airmen and his visionary role in designing a protocol for the Army to overcome discrimination and to help integrate the military
- 2009 Malcolm Nettingham** -- Recognition for his role as a trailblazer in his service in World War II as one of the original Tuskegee Airmen and his visionary role in passing the torch to youth with the message "Don't let anyone deter you from what you are qualified to do."
- 2008 Debbie Marulanda** -- Recognition for intervening on behalf of traumatized victims of human trafficking in a dignified manner that ends their torment and sets them on a path to rebuild their lives
- 2007 Sandwich Ladies aka "The Baloney Club"** -- Recognition for asking, "Is there anything I can do?", and teaching us that when enough ordinary people respond, their wonderful accomplishments can move mountains
- 2007 Albeiro & Maria Hincaple** -- Recognition for demonstrating a level of selfless dedication to reach out to individuals confronted by overwhelming personal and family challenges
- 2006 The Patricia & William Lopez Family** -- Recognition for their passionate 24/7 responses to those in need in the community
- 2005 Mary Ryan of Westfield** -- Recognition for her extraordinary efforts to extend physical, emotional, educational and spiritual guidance and support to her family, children and the broader community
- 2004 Sally Ann Benjamin of Plainfield** -- Recognition for establishing and directing the volunteer-based NIA Community Habitat Development, Inc. Woman's Crisis Center
- 2003 Patricia McRae** -- Recognition for providing day care and after-school programs for Rahway's children.
- 2002 Donna Albanese-DeMair** -- Recognition for taking the initiative to form a grass roots community effort to unify the multi-cultural business owners on South Avenue in Plainfield in a generous spirit of cooperation to beautify the business district and to protect and enhance the area's economic environment

.....**Achievement by a Student (Added in 2004)**.....

- 2017 Nicholas Tarabokia, Colombia Elementary School, Berkeley Heights** -- Recognition for transforming a fearsome hardship to inspire hope, instill courage, and bring joy, comfort, and support to children and families battling cancer
- 2017 Alexandra Jackman, Westfield High School** -- Recognition for already, at a young age, opening up the world for special needs individuals, and opening up the eyes of those around her to their value
- 2016 Griffin Spielman / Governor Livingston High School, Berkeley Heights** -- Recognition for already, at age 18, a lifetime of brightening the lives of those around him

- 2015 **Benedictine Academy Cor Defenders** -- Recognition for harnessing the power of good in our communities to combat the evils of human trafficking
- 2014 **Dulce Cabezas, Linden High School** -- Recognition for calm and inspirational leadership that united and consoled a grieving community in a time of crisis
- 2013 **Marc Avena, Arthur L. Johnson High School, Clark** -- Recognition for welcoming the richness of life and spirit that comes from the melting pot of cultural diversity
- 2012 **Melissa Heron, Kean University** -- Recognition for demonstrating outstanding character and leadership abilities that serve as a role model for her peers and community guiding and inspiring them to make the world a better place
- 2011 **Johnna Booth, Hillside High School** -- Recognition for demonstrating an outstanding character and unselfish, caring nature that serves as a role model for her peers and community
- 2010 **Joseph Bonacorso, Arthur L. Johnson High School, Clark** - Recognition for charting new waters to raise awareness about global human rights initiatives, while, more importantly, making them matter in his own small town back home.

**Recipient of the New Jersey Human Relations Council's
2010 Award for Achievement by a Student presented November 2010**

- 2009 **Diogo Cardoso, Union County Vocational-Technical High School** - Recognition for defying the perception of physically challenged as a limitation by accomplishing academic and physical success, while inspiring others through personal strength and incredibly unselfish commitment to others
- 2007 **Hassan Edwards, Union County Vocational-Technical School** -- Recognition for his natural tendencies and efforts to look out for others, and to seek and make peace among and between students
- 2006 **Thomas Callahan, Jr., Linden High School** — Recognition for his ongoing selfless service, exceptional ability and willingness to serve his community and citizens of Union County
- 2005 **Cynthia Martinez, Rutgers University/Newark** — Recognition for demonstrating what friendship can be, and serving as a role model to show that the synergy of two together is much greater than the sum of each alone
- 2004 **Amanda Chokov, Elizabeth High School** — Recognition for projecting enthusiastic spirit for life, for overcoming challenges and difficulties, and for teaching valuable lessons to all who know her about appreciating life's many blessings despite the challenges that confront us along the way

.....**Achievement by an Educator (Added in 2010)**.....

- 2016 **Dr. Theodore Schlosberg, Executive Director, The New Jersey Workshop For The Arts** --Recognition for enriching our cultural lives, and for providing the opportunity for individuals with special needs to learn to fly through music
- 2015 **Zende Clark, Hillside Board of Education (ret.)** -- Recognition for calm and inspirational leadership that has made a difference
- 2014 **Dr. Danny Robertozzi, E.D.D., Linden Superintendent of Schools** -- Recognition for visionary leadership, inspirational participation and support, and tireless advocacy on behalf of students
- 2013 **Monica Goncalves, Linden High School** -- Recognition for openly seeking and encouraging enlightenment for her students -- which continue to make a difference and change our world
- 2012 **Esther Paden / Linden High School** -- Recognition for simultaneously teaching and nurturing her students and the community, with today's good works spreading ripples over many tomorrows
- 2011 **Henry Varriano (Clark)** -- Recognition for emphasizing the importance of a learning environment that embraces the arts, culture and citizenship and promotes and encompasses the entire community for the benefit of all students
- 2010 **Jordan Siegel, Roselle Public Schools** - Recognition for showing the heart, soul and body of violence and hate of yesterday and today to inspire students and the community to build a better tomorrow globally

.....**Achievement by the Media**.....

- 2016 Lorrie Sanchez and Carol Blank / Utterly Global LLC**-- Recognition for a vigorous, creative and pro-active "Bully Buster" stance and, of course, Virgil
- 2014 (To be awarded in 2015) Bernice Paglia** -- Recognition for her tremendously valuable civic service to the City of Plainfield and its 50,000 residents over her long career as a journalist
- 2005 Gabriel Gluck, Star Ledger** – Recognition for demonstrating a sensitivity for the needs and concerns of the community, especially the most vulnerable
- 2004 Ralph Adinolfe, Publisher, Union County Voice** – Recognition for demonstrating a sensitivity for the needs and concerns of the community, especially those who are most vulnerable
- 2003 Robert Misseck, Star Ledger Union County Bureau Chief** – Recognition for beautifully written "Neighbors" profiles series, appearing every Thursday in the Star Ledger's "In Our Towns" section, which feature extraordinary efforts of individuals who stand out as exemplary role models.
- 2002 Bob Braun, Star Ledger Columnist** – Recognition for beautifully written human interest stories which have served to enlighten the public about special considerations and needs, and, in some instances, to obtain solutions and support services for those he writes about.

.....**Achievement by Law Enforcement**.....

- 2017 Lt. James Schneider, Westfield Police Department (ret.)** -- Recognition for his outstanding achievements as a model law enforcement officer and his lifelong commitment to save lives and turn the light back on for those shrouded in darkness and despair
- 2017 Capt. Wally Torian, Plainfield Auxiliary Police Division** -- Recognition for a lifetime of volunteerism, community service, and civic activism
- 2016 Sergeant Russell Gottlick, Plainfield Police Division** -- Recognition for his professional and personal dedication to protect, serve, and to do whatever good he can do for everyone he encounters
- 2015 Auxiliary Chief Alexander Fitzgerald Parker, Rahway Police Department** -- Recognition for a lifetime of exemplary volunteer service to his community shining his brightest during its darkest hours in times of crisis
- 2014 Detective Afstratios "Steve" Zevlikaris, Linden Police Department** -- Recognition for his determination to teach, build and leave a meaningful mark on the paths he travels and the lives he touches, at home and abroad
- 2013 Sgt. Marianne Hopko and Sgt. Nancy Zimmerman (ret.), Union County Sheriff's Office** -- "Tree of Hope" Program -- Recognition for replacing fear and sorrow with untold joy, hope and sweet memories that will last a lifetime
- 2011 Lt. Keith Aslin, Linden Police Department** -- Recognition for ongoing efforts to sensitize students and the community to the injustices of bullying, bias, prejudice and hate while empowering them to stand up and speak out for themselves and others who are being victimized
- 2009 Chief Robert Quinlan, Hillside Police Department** -- Recognition for demonstrating visionary leadership and support with the community on behalf of all citizens within that community -- especially children while upholding the highest standards of integrity, honor and grace.
- 2007 Maria Esteves, UCPO Victim/Witness Unit, Union County Prosecutor's Office** -- Recognition for teaching us how you can endure the suffering from a personal tragedy, and still then reach out to help others avoid the same sorrowful loss
- 2006 Assistant Prosecutor John Esmerado, Supervisor, Child Abuse Unit, Union County Prosecutor's Office** – Recognition for constant efforts on behalf of children who are victims of sexual or physical abuse and those who suffer from other human rights abuses
- 2005 Detective Frank Bartone, Union County Sheriff's Office** – Recognition for his dedicated commitment of spirit and energy to, in his spare time, direct and produce a series of educational video programs to keep children and teens safe and out of harm's way

2004 Detective Robert Segear, Cranford Police Department – Recognition for his dedicated commitment of spirit and energy “to make a difference in the world because I was important in the life of a child”

2003 Chief Edward Santiago, Plainfield Police Department – Recognition for his dedicated commitment of spirit and energy as the Chief of Police and private citizen to improve the human condition and relationships between and among the citizens of Plainfield and the larger Union County community

2002 Lt. Guy M. Steward, Union County Prosecutor’s Office – Recognition for his enthusiastic response to a project commissioned by the UCHRC and Union County Prosecutor’s Office to improve communications and relations between Union County youth and law enforcement, and for asserting his own sensitivity and creativity that continue to make the PATT program a success

.....**Achievement in Public Service**.....

2017 Union County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Volunteers -- Recognition for volunteering to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves

2017 Carolyn George, Recreation Coordinator, Berkeley Heights Recreation Department -- Recognition for being a role model in, and tireless inspirational leader for, her community

2016 Nancy Bates -- Recognition for navigating, inspiring and setting the standard for greeting courtroom visitors

2015 Elizabeth Hulse, Dispute Resolution Specialist, New Jersey Office of Dispute Settlement -- Recognition for volunteering their time and expertise to shine a light in the darkness

2015 Sandra Thaler-Gerber, Esq., Civil Division Manager, Union County Superior Court/Elizabeth -- Recognition for volunteering their time and expertise to shine a light in the darkness

2014 Ralph Bernardo -- Recognition for his dedication to providing service to the community and improving the quality of life of its citizens

2013 -- Union County Medical Reserve Corp -- Recognition for volunteering, oftentimes in danger’s way, to improve and ensure health, well-being and quality of life for our citizens

2012 David Klurman, Director, Hillside Recreation Department -- Recognition for a lifetime of dedicated and devoted service, accomplishment and achievement on behalf of Hillside’s youth of all ages

2011 Union County Firefighters: William Lavin (Elizabeth), Andy Stratton (Cranford), Edwin Donnelly (Union), Al Srnka (Union) -- Recognition for paving the way for burned youth to find their own way past their physical and emotional scars to find friendship, joy and peace for a day, a week, and a lifetime

2009 Union County Sexual Assault Response Team - Felicia Infante, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner; Tamara Bauman, Director, Union County Rape Crisis Center; and Assistant Prosecutor David Hummel, Union County Prosecutor’s Office -- Recognition for the wide spectrum of round-the-clock assistance support provided by highly-trained and caring collaborators to sexual assault victims as they try to reclaim and rebuild their lives

2008 Elizabeth Geminder -- Recognition for her dedicated time, efforts and energies in professional, voluntary and personal efforts that brings comfort to and improves the lives of children, senior citizens, and underprivileged residents

2007 Angel G. Estrada, Freeholder Vice Chairman, Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders -- Recognition for professional, political and personal efforts to advocate for and protect the human rights of minorities, children and senior citizens

2005 The Honorable Joseph Cryan, Jr., New Jersey Assemblyman – Recognition for responding personally when confronted with individuals or families in the community who had extraordinary needs

2004 The Honorable Thomas H. Kean, Jr., New Jersey Senator – Recognition for legislative, professional and personal efforts to protect and enhance the human rights of the developmentally disabled and senior citizens, advocating for children’s health and promoting the arts, and for protecting human life as an emergency service volunteer

2002 Lewis Mingo, Jr., Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders – Recognition for exemplary volunteer service that aims to improve the quality of life for all Union County citizens, especially that of less privileged children

.....**Achievement by The Clergy (Added in 2006)**

- 2016 Reverend Elizabeth Alexander** -- Recognition for her outreach to those who are trying to find their way back to society and her dedicated advocacy for social justice and peacekeeping
- 2015 Rev. Jeremy Montgomery** -- Recognition for bringing people and the community together in action and hope to break the cycle of poverty
- 2014 Rev. Princeton H. Holt** -- Recognition for creating and delivering a powerful message of hope and redemption, which are born out of despair and death
- 2012 Reverend Manuel Donelson / Masterpiece Program, City of Linden** -- Recognition for his visionary leadership to provide a safe haven for Linden's youth while enriching their bodies, minds and hearts and encouraging them and guiding them to reach for the stars
- 2011 Reverend Dr. Gerald Lamont Thomas, Shiloh Baptist Church** -- Recognition for his visionary leadership of his congregation and community to embrace each other as they work to build a brighter future for themselves and each other
- 2009 Father Donald Hummel, St. Agnes Church, Clark** - Recognition for delivering while yet transcending that activity which is at hand to always offer a safe haven, a higher ground, and a loftier place to rest and believe the best for and about ourselves
- 2008 Fountain Baptist Church / Reverend J. Michael Sanders** -- Recognition for the power and energy of individual and collective efforts to substantively address the long-term needs of the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita
- 2006 Reverend Joseph L. Adair** -- Recognition for providing extraordinary and courageous leadership in joining forces with law enforcement and other community organizations to marshal community venues to confront some of the community's toughest problems

.....**Achievement by a Faith-Based Organization (Added in 2010)**.....

- 2016 Community Access Unlimited's Union County Interfaith Coordinating Committee Council** -- Recognition for harnessing the collective power to create a sum of all the parts that is greater than the whole
- 2010 Westminster Comforters, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Berkeley Heights** - Recognition for eloquently showcasing the connection between the fabric of a quilt and the fabric of a life of a child

.....**Achievement by the Military/ A Veteran (Added in 2013)**.....

- 2017 Kevin Murphy, U.S. Air Force, N.J. Air National Guard, N.J. Army National Guard, U.S. Army (ret.)** -- Recognition for a lifetime of service to our country and his continued determined commitment to support and improve the quality of life for our veterans
- 2017 Sgt. Brett D'Alessandro, United States Marine Corps (ret.)** -- Recognition for his service to our country, and his unselfish dedication to improve the state of life for homeless veterans, to whom we owe so much
- 2016 Colonel Edward Chrystal / Army National Guard** -- Recognition for his service to our community, state and country; and for making a difference in our world
- 2015 James Grover, Dominick DeJohn, Angelo Monaco** -- Recognition for their service to our country; and for making a difference in our world
- 2014 Joseph Barbella** -- Recognition for making a difference -- then and now
- 2013 First Sergeant Michael Philibert, USMC (ret.)** -- Recognition for making a difference -- always

.....**Special Achievement Awards**.....

- 2016 **Charles Newman, Union County Office for the Disabled (ret.)** -- Recognition for inspirational personal and professional perseverance to find, create and distribute keys to unlock doors for so many
- 2016 **Jim McKeon / Broken Hearts Memorial** -- Recognition for creating and displaying hearts to help soothe broken and sorrowful hearts
- 2016 **Captain Ralph Gregson (ret.) / Cranford Auxiliary Police Department** -- Recognition for exemplary volunteer service to his community in both good times and in times of crisis and great need
- 2016 **Police Officer Gerald McDermott / Summit Police Department** -- Recognition for his unselfish dedication to bridge cultural gaps within the community and to cultivate relationships with youth and their families
- 2016 **Andrew Ertman** -- Recognition for extraordinary service on behalf of Union County's victimized children and their families
- 2016 **Detective Paul Pasternak/ Elizabeth Police Department** -- Recognition for extraordinary service on behalf of Union County's victimized children and their families
- 2015 **Miguel Garcia**-- Recognition for selfless dedication to come to the aid of, and ultimately save the life of, a fellow human being
- 2015 **Carlos Cancel**-- Recognition for selfless dedication to come to the aid of, and ultimately save the life of, a fellow human being
- 2015 **Hayley Zimmermann** -- Recognition for selfless dedication to come to the aid of, and ultimately save the life of, a fellow human being
- 2014 **Sgt. Larry Brown Jr., Plainfield Police Division** -- Recognition for his humanitarian approach and extraordinary service to the citizens of his community, especially its at-risk-youth
- 2013 (Awarded in 2014) **Dr. Paula Rodriguez Rust, Spectrum Diversity LLC** -- Recognition for her life's work, personally and professionally, to spread education and enlightenment and for her outstanding contributions to make a difference and change our world
- 2013 **Dr. Carmen Centuolo Musial** -- Recognition for her advocacy, wide-ranging contributions and personal charisma that have made a difference in the lives of many children and adults throughout her innovative and visionary career as a dedicated educator
- 2012 **Hernan Agudelo** -- Recognition for selfless bravery and quick heroic action that put his own life at risk while saving the lives of his two neighbors
- 2012 **Helene Scheuer** -- Recognition for a lifetime of personal dedication and professional excellence providing guidance and expertise using skillful communications to achieve equality, opportunity, and justice for all
- 2012 **St. Teresa of Avila Church, Summit** -- Recognition for providing a beacon of hope, faith and unity for a better future for the many new immigrants in the community
- 2012 **Dr. Dennis Vodarsik** -- Recognition for a lifetime of immeasurable compassion, concern, wisdom, love and untiring dedication to his fellow man and community
- 2011 **Clara Kramer** -- Recognition for providing a written and living testament to the dual nature of people: for as bad as things may be, they can always be balanced by goodness
- 2011 **Mary Beth Kelley (Trinitas Hospital)** -- Recognition for providing visionary and progressive leadership which has resulted in a top-notch nursing school, while simultaneously creating opportunities for students of diverse background and need to participate and achieve a nursing degree
- 2011 **In Honor Of Jo Ann Miller (posthumously). Award accepted by her husband John Miller** -- Recognition for a legacy of a woman which is deemed to be great, and for professionally and personally "always doing the right thing"
- 2010 **Elisa Sananman** - Recognition for her decades of service as an advocate, organizer, trailblazer and torch-bearer in initiatives that help to reclaim and reinvent life for refugees, and individuals with physical disabilities

2010 Sandra Cureton - Recognition for being here, there and everywhere in her community, and always going the extra mile to deliver excellence and magnificence

2010 Annie R. Lucas - Recognition for her continuous journey to improve the quality of life in the local and global communities

2010 Flor Gonzales - Recognition for steadfast determination, commitment, perseverance and heart to help those in her community who desperately needed someone, and who found her
**Recipient of the 2010 Award for Achievement by an Individual
presented in 2007 by the New Jersey Human Relations Council**

2009 Lynn Bilman - Recognition for literally sharing a world of knowledge with young students to expand their worlds while helping them to internalize that, in their county or across the globe, it's a small world, after all!

2009 Margarite Robinson - Recognition for her embodiment as a role model ceaselessly working to improve the human condition and human spirit, and find equality for all

2009 Herbert T. Green - Recognition for a lifetime of activities in the realm of education, voter registration dedicated to enhance the human spirit and improve the quality of life and relationships for citizens of all ages

2008 Angela Scheck -- Recognition for striving toward creating a peaceful world by encouraging and teaching students and adults tolerance and respect, and how to peacefully resolve conflicts

2008 Tricia Nering -- Recognition for providing a caring place that demonstrates a big heart for humanity, with all the dignity it deserves

2008 George Castro -- Recognition for contributions to the community, especially through his high-quality theatrical productions for children

2007 Kevin LaMastra, ESL / World Languages Teacher, Joseph E. Soehl Middle School, Linden -- Recognition for bringing his own creative energies to bear to create programs and projects to confront some of the most profound challenges of our time, striving to bring peace to a world torn with strife.

2007 Special Achievement Award in honor of Kevin Apuzzio (posthumously) -- Award accepted by Dr. Joseph Apuzzio & Mrs. Marilee Apuzzio, Kevin's parents -- Recognition for a legacy of a man who is deemed to be great, even though his years were just a few.

2007 Robert P. O'Leary, Executive Assistant Prosecutor (ret.), Union County Prosecutor's Office -- Recognition for a 27-year career accentuated by outstanding efforts to teach students about the dangers of wrong choices and save one life at a time

2007 Karen E. Positan, Assistant Public Information Officer, Union County Prosecutor's Office; Commissioner & Recording Secretary for the Union County Human Relations Commission -- Recognition for her energy, enthusiasm, and untiringly selfless dedication to the work of the Commission and for the good of the community.

2006 Stuart Green, M.S.W. -- Founder/Chairman, New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness & Prevention -- Recognition for bringing a high level of sensitivity and a high calibre of professional leadership in the area of awareness and prevention of bullying, intimidation, harassment and hazing in Cranford, Union County and in New Jersey

2006 Wilson Londono, Los Faroles Restaurant, Elizabeth -- Recognition for taking the time and finding the energy to add to the quality of life of citizens in the community that addresses the needs of the most at-risk

2006 Joseph Nierle, Drama Teacher, Westfield High School -- Recognition for producing plays that confront important contemporary issues that are controversial in nature, and afford an indelible experience upon those who participate as actors and viewers

2005 Ina White -- Recognition for a lifelong commitment on behalf of people with disabilities who face discrimination and limited opportunities and to champion the full inclusion of people with disabilities into society

2005 **Mary Krech** — Recognition for extraordinary volunteerism and unselfish dedication to doing good deeds on behalf of anyone in need that she meets or finds out about along life's pathways

2005 **Caroline Petrilla-Sagnip, Esq.** — Recognition for her invaluable Conflict Mediation training and ongoing and dedicated support of the Union County Human Relations Commissioners, and our programs, activities and initiatives

2004 **Honorable Edward W. Beglin, Jr., Assignment Judge of the Superior Court, State of New Jersey --** — Recognition for providing enlightened and sensitive leadership in reaching out to assist troubled youth in Union County to rebuild their lives toward a brighter future with hope and promise

2004 **Honorable Rudolph N. Hawkins, Jr., Judge of the Superior Court, State of New Jersey** — Recognition for providing enlightened and sensitive leadership in reaching out to assist troubled youth in Union County to rebuild their lives toward a brighter future with hope and promise

2003 **Dr. Thelma Hurd** — Recognition for providing leadership that motivates high standards from students and teachers and emphasizing accountability and accomplishments

2003 **John Griffith** — Recognition for spotlighting his dedicated extracurricular efforts to influence students and at-risk youth to stay in school and to commit themselves to high quality and advanced academic achievement, and for serving as a mentor to countless individuals throughout his career, including co-founding a mentoring organization at PSE&G

2002 **Victor Richel** — Recognition for his humanitarianism as an individual, businessman, and board member

2002 **Robin Parker, former Deputy Attorney General, NJ Office of Bias Crime & Community Relations** — Recognition for his outstanding and far-reaching efforts in the arena of human relations

.....**Special Recognition**.....

The Union County Human Relations Commission would like to express its appreciation to these individuals for their invaluable contributions to revitalizing the Commission in 1997, and their continued leadership, dedication to, and support of, the Commission, its programs and activities.

2016 **Sergeant Leonard Guarino / Elizabeth Police Department (ret.), UCHRC Co-Chair, 2014 to 2016**

2014 **Barbara Boyer, UCHRC Co-Chair, 2012 to 2014**

2013 **Captain Ana Zsak (ret.), Union County Prosecutor's Office, Bias Crimes Unit**

2013 **Det Johnny Ho, Union County Prosecutor's Office, Bias Crimes Unit**

2012 **Peter McTiernan, UCHRC Co-Chair, 2010 to 2012**

2010 **Charles Newman, UCHRC Co-Chair, 2008 to 2010**

2008 **Alfred E. Brown, UCHRC Co-Chair, 2006-2008**

2006 **Helene Scheuer, UCHRC Co-Chair 2004-2006**

2006 **James F. Keefe, Esq., First Assistant Prosecutor 1997-2004; UCHRC Co-Chair 1997 to December 2013.**

2006 **SPECIAL PRESENTATION** by the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders honoring James F. Keefe, Esq., Union County Human Relations Commission Co-Chair (1997 to present) commemorating his Award for Achievement by Law Enforcement presented in 2007 by the New Jersey Human Relations Council recognizing his high moral standards, keen sense of fairness, and highly valued qualities as a leader, role model and friend

2004 **Jack Weinshanker, UCHRC Co-Chair 2002-2004**

2002 **Faheemah El-Amin, UCHRC Co-Chair 2000-2002**

2000 **Thomas V. Manahan, Union County Prosecutor 1997-2002**

2000 **James Glassen, Esq., UCHRC Co-Chair 1998-2000**