

Legislation Text

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PARKS & RECREATION: COMMUNITY ADVOCATE AWARD

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The City of Longview Parks & Recreation Department goal of the Community Advocate Award is to recognize community members who support the mission of Longview Parks and Recreation to build a healthy Longview community. To be considered for the Award, the department created the following criteria:

- May be involved in Longview Parks & Recreation but must be involved in additional activities outside of the department
- Majority of advocacy must benefit City of Longview Residents.
- Recipients work must align with our mission
- Priority for award goes to those that deal with a vulnerable population
- Advocate must volunteer. Award may be given to a person based on their paid job position, but they must also volunteer in some capacity.

This Fall, the City of Longview Parks and Recreation Department decided to recognize, Erika Quiroz, Cary Bellows & Juice Quiroz of Radical Love. These individuals have been chosen because they enhance the quality of life for residents and inspire us every day with their passion and commitment to make Longview a better place to live, work, and play. Erika and Juice came to Washington in 2012 looking for a positive community to call home. During this time the Longview/Kelso area was already in the midst of its housing and homeless crisis. With the closure of Love Overwhelming coinciding with dropping temperatures, Erika knew there would be a spike of homeless individuals on the streets unprepared for freezing weather, and felt moved to do something to help those in need. Erika, being a life-long hobby chef, and her son Juice, took it upon themselves to make a large pot of chili to help warm those on that cold night. Through the support of many organizations and individuals in our community, that outreach turned into a regular meal which welcomed all who needed to be fed, body and soul. Erika quickly recognized that many of those attending the regular meals depended on heavily processed, nutrient-deficient foods to survive, and as a result had many health complications because of or worsened by poor nutrition. Erika focused on providing nutrient-rich meals, utilizing the bounty of local gardeners, donors, and the school gardens to serve nourishing food in a loving, welcoming family-style meal. Through the efforts of Erika, her partner Cary Bellows, Juice and countless volunteers and supporters, Radical Love continues to thrive. They now serve two meals each week and it's not uncommon for some of the regular guests to call out, "Love you!" when leaving, as one does when leaving the home of a friend or family member. Erika Says: "We, as a human family, are all a part of one living body. If one part of the body is unwell, we are all unwell. When we nourish the whole, we uplift the whole. And, as love grows, we grow, too." We all would like to thank Erica, Cary, and Juice for their dedication to improving the health and wellbeing of so many Cowlitz County residents!