

**For Immediate Release  
November 13, 2007**

**Contact: Judy King  
(650) 591-2101**

**2007 Diamond Award Winners Announced  
Awards Presented Dec. 6th at "Diamonds for the Holidays"**

**Belmont, CA**—Each year the Diamond Awards are presented to give recognition to individuals and organizations for their artistic achievements and contributions to the arts in San Mateo County. Awards are normally given in eight categories. This year, due to outstanding contributions made by so many individuals, two awards will have two winners in a total of six categories. On December 6, The 2007 Diamond Awards will be presented to Nathan Chan (*Ray Lorenzato Young Artist Award*), Fred Gerhauser (*Individual Artist*), Estelle Kelley and Charles Bettencourt (*Volunteers in the Arts*), Maria Spremich and Mike Galisatus (*Arts Educators*), City of Redwood City (*Government Support*) and Notre Dame de Namur University Department of Theatre and Dance (*Arts Organization*). The Honorary Chair of the 2007 Diamond Awards is Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors.

**Nathan Chan** (*Ray Lorenzato Young Artist Award*), is a 13-year-old from Hillsborough who is being recognized for being an outstanding, award-winning classical cellist. Among his many performances, he has performed as a soloist with the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra and the San Francisco Sunset Youth Orchestra as well as the National Cello Institute (Los Angeles), American String Teachers Association (Reno, Nevada & San Diego, CA), and California Summer Music (Pebble Beach, CA). In addition, Nathan is credited with generously sharing his musical talents by performing at many benefit concerts including the American Alzheimer Association, Friends of Children with Special Needs, The Sunset Retirement Community and for collaborating with San Francisco Symphony to help raise money for a local high school. Nathan's many highlights include a solo recital for the San Francisco Symphony League and the filming of a feature documentary on talented young musicians for HBO. The 2-part program called "The Music in Me" aired in the fall of 2006 on the HBO network. He recently played at Carnegie Hall and since that appearance was invited to perform on legendary pop & jazz artist Roberta Flack's upcoming tribute album of Beatles songs for Sony Records. To learn more about Nathan visit: [www.sfgate.com](http://www.sfgate.com) (search Nathan Chan Cellist) or [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) (Search Nathan boy cellist).

**Fred Gerhauser** (*Individual Artist*), is being recognized for his work as a

serigrapher and photographer. He has won many prestigious awards in San Mateo County and beyond. His traveling exhibit of photos of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina won him great acclaim. His serigraphs have won "Best of Show" at competitions and the San Mateo County Fair. He is a key member of the Belmont Arts Council, a valuable exhibitor at Twin Pines Art Center and is generous with his help to other artists. He recently won a scholarship to the Academy of Art University in San Francisco.

**Estelle Kelley** (*Volunteer in the Arts*), is a Pacifica resident and founder of "Estelle Kelley's Performing Arts Group". For more than fourteen years, Estelle and her group have been providing live entertainment for people in senior centers, assisted living homes, rehab centers, retirement homes and at various clubs. The performances, reminiscent of Lawrence Welk's variety shows, feature singing and dancing covering a wide range of styles. Over 60 performances were logged in 2006. Estelle plans, choreographs, rehearses, and costumes the group of talented volunteers. The ensemble brings joy wherever they perform and are always asked to return.

**Charles Bettencourt** (*Volunteer in the Arts*), is a deserving artist recognized for his many years of service as the Chairman of Exhibits for the Burlingame Art Society. In this capacity he has curated the exhibits, and has attended to every detail from hanging the exhibits, preparing all signage, providing materials and even picking up and delivering art entries for other artists. He has served in every leadership capacity at the Burlingame Art Society and generously and cheerfully donates countless hours to advance the arts. Charles is also an accomplished watercolorist who has won many awards for his work.

**Maria Spremich** (*Arts Educator*), is receiving the award in recognition of her contributions to the art of dance in San Mateo County. She has been a ballet instructor for the South San Francisco Recreation and Community Services Department for over 20 years and was formerly a professional dancer with the Lines Ballet Company and a former instructor in the San Francisco Conservatory of Ballet and the Academy of Ballet. Each year, in addition to teaching her classes, she organizes, choreographs, costumes and rehearses over 170 children to perform in a student showcase at a local high school. Maria was recently recognized by the South San Francisco Parks and Recreation Commission for being instrumental in officially naming the ballet program, the South San Francisco Civic Ballet.

**Michael Galisatus** (*Arts Educator*), is being recognized for being an inspiring professor of music at the College of San Mateo, where he is the Jazz Ensemble director. He is coordinating the CSM Jazz Festival for the

Bay Area's top high school jazz bands, which will be held November 16. Before coming to CSM, he taught music at Aragon High School in San Mateo. He also has taught at the Monterey Jazz Festival Summer Jazz Camp for junior and senior high school students. In 2004, he was recognized by the California Music Educators Association as "Jazz Educator of the Year." Michael plays trumpet and flugelhorn and has recorded with a number of artists, including Pete Escovedo and Queen Ida. He has performed with such artists as Natalie Cole, The Temptations, Barry Manilow, and Patti LaBelle.

**City of Redwood City** (*Government Support*) is recognized for its vision and follow through in developing the Courthouse Square and Annex which has permanently enhanced the downtown business area and has created a vibrant artistic forum for the public's enjoyment. Events such as Art on the Square, Dancing on the Square, Movies on the Square, Music on the Square and the Friday Night Art Walk are now available for all to enjoy—free of charge! The combination of the City of Redwood City, The Redwood City Library with its many hosted readings, musical performances and film nights, plus the cultural offerings of the San Mateo County Historical Association, has created an artistic synergy that has enlivened the downtown environment and has made Redwood City a year round cultural destination.

**Notre Dame de Namur Department of Theatre and Dance** (*Arts Organization*) is recognized for outstanding achievement and commitment to San Mateo County theatre arts and the community. This December marks the 22nd anniversary of "The Gift—A Musical Theatre Production of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol." Nine professional caliber performances bring the magic of "The Gift" to over 5,000 community members free of charge. NDNU donates the use of its theatre in recognition of this important charity event. Each year, audiences donate over 1,500 toys and tons of canned food that is then distributed by social service organizations to those in need during the holidays.

The Diamond Awards will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Thursday evening, December 6, at Twin Pines Art Center, 10 Twin Pines Lane (at Twin Pines Park) in Belmont.

The public is welcome to attend the full evening of events including a reception, inaugural show of the Peninsula Museum of Art's permanent collection, Artist Open Studios and the Diamond Awards recognition program. There is no cost to attend. Please call the Peninsula Arts Council to RSVP at (650) 591-2101 as space is limited.

The Peninsula Arts Council has offices in the Twin Pines Art Center in

Belmont. It is a non-profit organization serving San Mateo County to enhance opportunities for arts experiences and artistic expression for all ages, promotes resource sharing and collaboration and advocates for the arts through activities, a Web site and cultural calendar, and a regular schedule of exhibitions in three gallery spaces and special events.

The Peninsula Arts Council provides a vital link between local arts organizations and the San Mateo County Arts Commission, the California Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, and the California Arts Council.

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The Peninsula Arts Council  
10 Twin Pines Lane (Twin Pines Park)  
Belmont, CA 94002  
(650) 591-2101  
[info@peninsulaartscouncil.org](mailto:info@peninsulaartscouncil.org)

[www.peninsulaartscouncil.org](http://www.peninsulaartscouncil.org)