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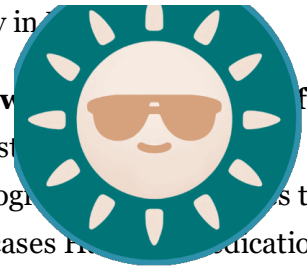
# City of Encinitas 2023 Environmental Award Winners Announced

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Encinitas, CA, April 19, 2024 – The City of Encinitas Environmental Commission is proud to announce the winners of its prestigious Environmental Award Program (EAP), now in its ninth year. The EAP seeks to recognize deserving individuals, businesses, and non-profits for their commitment to environmental stewardship and outstanding environmental achievements. Each year, the City of Encinitas recognizes two Excellence in Environmental Stewardship awards given to a for-profit business and a non-profit organization, and two individual Environmental Hero awards to recognize an adult and a youth who are not necessarily affiliated with a business or non-profit organization.

**The 2023 winner of the Excellence in Environmental Stewardship Award in the Non-profit Organization category is the Encinitas Community Garden.** The Encinitas Community Garden was established in 2008 as a non-profit that helps its members grow environmentally and sustainably produced food. Requirements for the 120 plots in the garden include the use of organic soil, the prohibition of synthetic pesticides or fertilizers, and conservation of water with irrigation timers and rainwater that is captured on-site. A greenhouse is provided to start plants from seed until they are hardy enough to grow in the ground. The Encinitas Community Garden collects any harvested surplus vegetables for the non-profit Healthy Day Partners which distributes the produce to food insecure populations. The garden also creates a supportive community where neighbors can share tools, skills, and inspiration. As the participating gardeners connect with the land, this not only helps them economically, but they also become hopeful, confident, and healthy. These efforts are a great example of how to be environmentally friendly in

**The 2023 winner of the Excellence in Environmental Stewardship Award in the For-profit Business category is Hansen Surfboards.** Hansen Surfboards has demonstrated environmental stewardship by their utilization of the Plastic Beach recycling program, which is the responsible recycling of plastic wrap waste. Participation in this program showcases Hansen Surfboards' dedication to sustainable practices and commitment to reducing plastic waste in Southern California. In addition, Hansen Surfboards has taken actions to help the City of Encinitas achieve its climate action goals with the installation



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of solar panels in its parking lot. By incorporating these eco-friendly initiatives into their business, Hansen is an inspiring example for the community, making them a deserving candidate for this award.

**The 2023 winner of the Environmental Hero Award in the Adult category is Dr. Nancy North.** A member of the Encinitas Rotary, Dr. North took the initiative to create a sustainability committee within her club called "Econitas". To date, with Dr. North's guidance, Rotary Club has organized two tours per year of the San Elijo Lagoon by the Nature Collective for kids and adults, and supported zero waste events like Encinitas Food and Wine Festival, Heritage Holiday Tree Lighting and EcoFest. Dr. North inspired her club with a reusable plastic bag drive which gathered over 200 bags and donated them to the Community Resource Center for their food distribution program. Dr. North also spearheaded a second drive for metal water bottles, collecting over 100 bottles for the local non-profit organization Los Angelitos which supports youth soccer. These efforts to promote environmental initiatives in Encinitas make Dr. North deserving of the Adult Hero Award.

**The 2023 winner of the Environmental Hero Award in the Youth category is Sofia Gonzalez.** At Ocean Knoll Elementary School, Ms. Gonzalez participated in her school's Green Team helping to support sustainability efforts like composting, recycling, water conservation and energy conservation. In fifth, sixth and seventh grades, she participated in the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Internship Program, where students study water quality and develop solutions to reduce polluted runoff. As an intern, Ms. Gonzalez presented to the State Water Resources Control Board in Sacramento about solutions to improve stormwater quality. In addition, she was an invited speaker at a major water quality conference in Las Vegas on the same topic. As a member of Swamis Surfing Association, Ms. Gonzalez regularly participates in beach cleanups. Ms. Gonzalez is finishing up her fourth year on the Encinitas Youth Commission. For the commission, she served on the Environmental Committee all four years and the Zero Waste Committee for one year. Sofia Gonzalez truly exemplifies what it means to be an environmental hero.

The awards were presented to recipients at the City Council meeting on April 17, 2024.

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