

Four Businesses Take Home Mayor's Awards for Efforts Aimed at People with Disabilities



Jeffrey Harrison, Marlee King, David Noll, Mayor Helene Schneider, Mark Webb, Parker Anderson, Jack Norqual and Dee Duncan. (Aaron Bratkovics photo)

Mayor Helene Schneider awarded four local organizations for their efforts to increase access and facilitate employment for people with disabilities.

The recipients were honored at this year's 11th Annual Mayor's Awards, a community breakfast event in recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

*Mayor Schneider awarded **New Directions**, a local non-profit, for its dedication to facilitating travel opportunities for people with disabilities. Since opening in 1985, Founder Dee Duncan has taken over 17,000 people with intellectual impairment on "trips of a lifetime".*

Pacific Resources International received an award for reflecting the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in its employment practices. Cullen Dorais is the newest employee and the first person with Autism to join the team.

Ice in Paradise received an award for the architectural layout of its new skating arena in Goleta, which touts full ADA accessibility including adapted locker rooms, specialized ramps to the ice, benches and viewing areas.

The Mayor's Award for Outstanding Effort went to Mark Webb, food service director at Villa Santa Barbara. Webb has been a steadfast advocate for hiring people with disabilities and goes above and beyond to make sure they are successful in their work.

Keynote speaker Brenda Premo, founding director of Western University's Harris Family Center for Disability and Health Policy, shared her insightful historical and personal perspective on shaping the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Mayor Schneider commented on the immense progress made, and celebrated the bicentennial anniversary of the ADA this year.

Moving forward she encouraged the community to continue "reflecting the spirit of the law," by broadening access to all people in years to come.

People with disabilities are often highly recommended by their employers, particularly for their dedication to their work. Employers interested in learning more about resources like job coaching or being part of the event should contact Heather Wennergren at hwennergren@tri-counties.org.

— *Heather Wennergren represents Mayor Helene Schneider.*