



CITY OF STOCKTON NEWS RELEASE

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Head of Operation Peacekeeper Program to Receive Peacemaker of the Year Award

(Stockton, CA) - Ralph Womack, City of Stockton Operation Peacekeeper Program Manager, has been selected as one of three individuals to receive the 2011 Peacemaker of the Year Award on Thursday, October 20, 2011, at 6p. The award will be presented at a dinner and ceremony held on International Conflict Resolution Day at the DeRosa Center, University of the Pacific.

“This is a huge and humbling honor,” said Womack. “I am thankful for the opportunity to be acknowledged as part of something bigger that makes a difference in our community, particularly in the lives of young people. I appreciate that the Mediation Center continues to recognize efforts that promote peaceful resolutions to conflict.”

The Mediation Center of San Joaquin and the University of the Pacific School of International Studies sponsor the Awards, now in their 16th year. Mr. Womack, along with Gloria Allen and Carol Zeiter, will be joining a distinguished group of over 50 people who

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have received this honor, individuals, who, like Mr. Womack, are dedicated to building a community of peace and breaking the cycle of violence.

“We know the Operation Peacekeeper program makes a significant contribution toward preventing and eliminating violence in our community,” said Mayor Johnston. “We receive inquiries from throughout the nation on a regular basis from other communities who want to emulate what we are doing here. We owe the success of the program to Mr. Womack and Peacekeeper Outreach Workers, who work tirelessly everyday to help each and every young person they encounter. They are certainly all deserving of this recognition, and Ralph, in particular, for his leadership and dedication.”

For additional information about the Peacemaker of the Year Award celebration, please contact Mediation Center of San Joaquin at (209) 474-8794 or visit www.mediatorsRus.org. Information about the City of Stockton Operation Peacekeeper program is available by calling (209) 937-8880 or by visiting the City of Stockton web site at www.stocktongov.com/peacekeepers.

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Operation Peacekeeper is an innovative program with a specific mission of reducing youth gang membership and violence. Youth Outreach Workers, some of them former gang members themselves, interact with youths, who are primarily 10-18 years old, to provide positive alternatives to gang membership through long-term mentoring. Outreach Workers also coordinate delivery of various resources. A systematic approach is used to evaluate each youth referred to the program. As youths progress, they are provided more services and the critical component of having at least one responsible adult, an Outreach Worker, in their lives. Successful steps are recognized and rewarded. A strong partnership between Operation Peacekeeper program staff and governmental agencies, along with non-profit, faith-based and community-based organizations, makes prevention/intervention efforts effective.

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