



Sustainable San Mateo County

Economy. Equity. Environment.

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Sustainable San Mateo County Announces 2023 Awardees

Sustainable San Mateo County (SSMC) will honor four local sustainability champions at its **24th Annual Awards Celebration** from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. on **Thursday, March 30**, for their contributions to sustainability in San Mateo County. They are **Diane Bailey** and **Tom Kabat** of Menlo Spark; **Redwood High School**, a continuation school in Redwood City; and **SEI**, a nonprofit based in San Rafael that empowers students throughout the Bay Area to become environmental leaders.

SSMC and the **American Institute of Architects' San Mateo County Chapter** will present the **2023 Green Building Award** to the **Burlingame Community Center** in Burlingame. **Honorable Mentions** will be awarded to the **Atherton Library** in Atherton and **Gilead Sciences' Wellbeing Center** in Foster City.

The **All-Electric Leadership Awards**, sponsored by **Peninsula Clean Energy**, will also be presented during the Awards Celebration.

In keeping with the theme of the event, "A hopeful future for our youth," SSMC will feature three local high school students who have volunteered their time to make the county more sustainable. **Alex Wagonfeld** of Hillsborough will receive a **Sustainability Youth Commendation** from SSMC for his work in mobilizing peers at The Nueva School and other local high schools to get involved in environmental projects, and his involvement in urging private high schools across the U.S. to divest from fossil fuels. Other students who will be recognized during the event are **Colin Chu** of Portola Valley, who also attends The Nueva School, and **Ethan Hua** of San Mateo, who attends Aragon High School.

For the first time since 2018, the event will return to an in-person venue at the Bayview Dining Room at the College of San Mateo. The event starts at 5:30 p.m. and includes a hosted reception, dinner, silent and live auctions, and an awards program filled with inspiring stories about local sustainability heroes.

SSMC's **4th Annual Virtual Auction** will kick off on **March 23** and conclude on **April 2** at 5 p.m. All online bids will be silent.

Tickets are available at auctria.events/SSMCAwards2023. Individual tickets cost \$175; a table of 10 costs \$1,650. Sponsorships range from \$500 to \$10,000 and include benefits. Visit <https://sustainablesanmateo.org/sponsorship-opportunities> for details. For more information, visit <https://sustainablesanmateo.org/awards2023>, email event@sustainablesanmateo.org or call 650-918-1992.

The annual SSMC awards are designed to raise awareness of sustainability in the community and

encourage others to take action. “Come to network and be inspired by our awardees and leave empowered and energized about contributing to local sustainability efforts,” said Christine Kohl-Zaugg, Executive Director of SSMC.

Sustainability Awards will be awarded to four recipients:

- **Diane Bailey**, who has led sustainability efforts in Menlo Park since 2015 through the nonprofit Menlo Spark. Under her leadership, with much support from another awardee, Tom Kabat, Menlo Spark helped mobilize the city’s residents to address climate change, persuading the City Council to adopt a goal of being carbon neutral by 2030 – the most aggressive city goal in San Mateo County. Last year, Menlo Spark helped forge a public-private partnership between BlocPower and Menlo Park for a citywide electrification and job training program, including garnering \$4.5 million in state funding to help low-income households make the switch from natural gas in Menlo Park.
- **Tom Kabat**, Chair of Menlo Park’s Environmental Quality Commission, is an environmental and mechanical engineer with four decades of experience in energy efficiency, utility programs, utility supply planning and public policy areas. Tom leverages his broad experience by providing help and analysis to a variety of electrification efforts, including developing ways to electrify without needing to upsize electric panels. Tom assisted in a recent San Mateo County study of new methods to electrify homes. He enjoys working on Menlo Spark’s electrification guides, teaching bike repair at repair cafes and volunteering at Sunwork.org, installing heat pump water heaters.

Together, Diane and Tom founded the Campaign for Fossil Free Buildings in Silicon Valley (FFBSV) in 2019, which now has 40 member organizations. FFBSV has helped persuade 30 cities in San Mateo County and Santa Clara County, along with both counties, to limit or ban fossil fuels in new construction. It has inspired many other cities to do the same, helping to make all-electric building mainstream.

- **Redwood High School**, a continuation high school in the Sequoia Union High School District that has a strong commitment to students’ futures with a focus on post-secondary options and environmental sustainability. Its new sustainable and climate-resilient campus opened in 2018, featuring energy-efficient heating and cooling, solar power and bioswales. Located in Redwood City, the school features an expansive outdoor educational space with an organic garden, greenhouse, composting system, chicken coop, rainwater collection systems, riparian corridor and outdoor classroom. Students participate in environmentally infused curricula that include maintaining the school garden, using produce harvested from the garden in Culinary Arts classes, and analyzing food systems through hands-on aquaponics labs. An equity coach helps students furthest from opportunity receive support to reach their full potential.
- **SEI**, an environmental nonprofit based in San Rafael, builds young leaders throughout the Bay Area to drive sustainability solutions and develops leadership pathways from elementary school to early career. SEI’s Climate Corps Education Outside program, which provides outdoor garden education to elementary school students, has partnered with schools in six school districts in San Mateo County: Bayshore Elementary, Jefferson Elementary, Pacifica Elementary, San Mateo-Foster City Elementary, South San Francisco Unified and Redwood City Elementary. SEI’s Energize Schools program worked with the San Mateo County Office of Education to develop the K12 Strong Workforce Program, ensuring that middle school students are prepared for career technical education pathways upon entering high school. SEI’s Energize Colleges program has joined with the San Mateo County Community College District and

the San Mateo County Office of Education to host Fellows, who bring sustainable solutions to San Mateo County.

The **Green Building Award** will be presented to:

- The **Burlingame Community Center** in Burlingame, which opened in June 2022. The two-story, 36,000-square-foot building was designed as “pavilions in a park,” a concept that arose out of widespread community outreach that identified a desire for an inviting destination in the beautiful, natural setting of Washington Park. The Community Center achieves zero net energy through rooftop solar panels and includes a green roof, an emergency backup generator, and sustainable finishes and landscaping. It utilizes energy meters and a state-of-the-art building management system to manage and reduce energy consumption. A metric dashboard of the integrated building systems acts as a community teaching tool, showing the city’s commitment to its Climate Action Plan.
Owner: City of Burlingame. **Architect:** Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning, Inc., South San Francisco. **Builder:** BHM Construction, Napa.

Green Building Honorable Mentions will be awarded to:

- The **Atherton Library** in Atherton, a low-carbon, zero net energy-ready, all-electric project with modular, multiuse spaces and ample use of daylighting and natural ventilation.
Owner: Town of Atherton. **Architect:** WRNS Studio, San Francisco. **Builder:** S.J. Amoroso Construction, Inc., Redwood City.
- **Gilead Sciences’ Wellbeing Center** in Foster City. Early in the design process, the Gilead team identified synergies across building systems and disciplines to support health and wellness, as well as reduce energy loads. The two-story-high building includes solar panels, a water reclamation/reuse system, radiant heating/cooling and building materials that contribute to a healthy interior.
Owner: Gilead Sciences, Inc., Foster City. **Architect:** Flad Architects, San Francisco. **Builder:** Truebeck Construction, San Mateo.

About Sustainable San Mateo County

Founded in 1992, Sustainable San Mateo County is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to a vision of a sustainable future for everyone in the county. Its mission is to drive impactful action on economic, environmental and social equity issues that leads to sustainable practices and improves the long-term health of San Mateo County. For more information, visit <https://sustainablesanmateo.org>, email event@sustainablesanmateo.org or call 650-918-1992.