

City announces Golden Heart awards

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Two horrific acts of violence that took the lives of two Davis Joint Unified School District students nine years apart are remembered every year in part through annual awards bestowed by the city of Davis on adults and youth who have given much to the community.

This year is no exception.

The city this week announced the 2022 recipients of the Thong Hy Huynh awards, given in memory of Huynh, who was stabbed to death on the Davis High School campus in 1983, and the Golden Heart Awards, given in memory of Andrew

Mockus, a Holmes Junior High School student who was killed in 1992 by a group of

teens who beat him, robbed him and pushed him into the path of a moving train.

Those being honored with these city awards include adults, community organizations and teens who have contributed to the city in the areas of civil rights and community service as well as for one teen, overcoming personal challenges to make a difference in her



BAXI

Podcast host

community.

All of the award recipients will be honored during a recognition ceremony at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday before the City Council meeting.

The Golden Heart Awards, which have been presented by the City Council for nearly three decades, were created in the wake of the 1992 death of 14-year-old Mockus. His violent death stunned the city, which responded by holding public forums to discuss the issues facing the city's youth and ways the city could do more to help

In the end, the City Council adopted seven recommendations that

SEE GOLDEN, PAGE A3

GOLDEN: Award winners show commitment to helping community

From Page A1

grew out of the forums, including the creation of the Golden Heart Awards, which are given annually in two categories: overcoming personal challenges and community service. The personal challenge award recognizes kids who have overcome significant challenges in their lives, while the service award recognizes those who have given significant service to an expressed need in the community, to their peers or to their school.

Community Service

■ **Rohan Baxi**, a student at DaVinci Charter Academy, was nominated for a Golden Heart Award by Robin Dewey, president of Team Davis, a local non-profit that provides sports, recreational and education activities for youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Team Davis serves as the local Special Olympics Team.

Baxi, now 15, began volunteering for Team Davis when he was in the seventh grade, helping with some basketball practices and then coaching both basketball and track. He also helped with the football clinic that UC Davis football players offer

each year to Team Davis participants, as well as the annual basketball clinic that the UC Davis women's basketball team provides for Team Davis athletes.

"When the pandemic hit, Rohan came up with his own creative way to keep our athletes engaged and exercising," Dewey said in her nomination letter.

He created a hiking club and continues to regularly take Team Davis participants on local hikes on trails around Davis.

Baxi also hosts "Timeout Radio," a radio show and podcast on KDRT 95.7, where he covers sports, travel, school and other topics of interest to teens.

■ **Yanni Lowry**, a senior at Da Vinci, was nominated by Judy Wong-Chen, internship specialist for Da Vinci, who called Lowry "an exceptional Da Vinci High School student and

human being."

Lowry has left an indelible mark on her school, Wong-Chen said, including by

founding and serving as president of the Black Student Union.

"Her involvement stemmed from a lack of conversation and awareness of the larger Black Lives Matter movement and she was driven to act," the nomination letter said. "She made and sold shirts for proceeds to be donated to BLM."

Personal Challenge

■ **Erin McAllister**, a ninth grader at Holmes Junior High School, was



LOWRY
Indelible mark

nominated for a Golden Heart Award by Holmes counselor Marci Sarette, who said McAllister has inspired her with her resilience and character.

McAllister was 6 years old when her mother, Lesley, was diagnosed with cancer and 10 when her mother passed.

"Given the circumstances, I would understand if Erin held anger and bitterness," wrote Sarette. "But Erin chose a different path — one of service to others, hard work in

school, and compassion for all."

A big part of her life so far has been Camp Kesem, which serves children whose parents have cancer. McAllister has been attending Camp Kesem since she was very young and looks forward to it every summer, Sarette said.

"Her presence there is clearly a gift to all the staff, and to her fellow campers," Sarette's nomination letter said. "One of her greatest life aspirations is to become a camp counselor



McALLISTER
Service to others

at Camp Kesem so she can help children who are struggling with a parent's cancer."

The ceremony for the Golden Heart award recipients will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday on the patio outside of City Hall.