



City of
OAKLAND
California

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News from: Human Services Department

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Mayor Libby Schaaf to Present the City of Oakland Citizen Humanitarian Award to Alex McElree at “In the Name of Love” Sunday, January 17, 2016 - 7:00 pm

The 14th Annual Musical Tribute Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Oakland Scottish Rite Center, 1547 Lakeside Drive, Oakland, CA 94612

Oakland, CA—On Sunday, January 17th, **Mayor Libby Schaaf** will present the **Oakland Citizen Humanitarian Award** to **Alex McElree** for his outstanding work on behalf of the Oakland community at “**In the Name of Love,**” the **14th Annual Musical Tribute honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, an extensive civic and cultural event that pays homage through music, to one of the greatest humanitarians of our time.

Our 14th Annual Tribute will celebrate “**The Civil Rights Movement through the Music of Nina Simone**” highlighting 4 outstanding female vocalists **Patti Cathcart, Paula West, Rhiannon** and **Terrance Kelly** along with an exciting backup band including **Glen Pearson** on piano, **Marcus Shelby** on bass and **Leon Joyce, Jr.** on drums. These outstanding musicians have each individually made a tremendous impact on the Bay Area cultural scene, and the 2016 program will bring them together onto the stage for the first time to celebrate the civil rights movement through the music of Nina Simone and to provide a platform for a one-time exciting collective, creative experience meant to inspire hope, celebrate Oakland’s cultural history and highlight the power of music to spur positive change. The tribute will also include the 55-voice **Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir**; and the 200-voice **Living Jazz Children’s Project** backed up by the **Oaktown Jazz Workshops**. **Dana King**, formerly with CBS, will serve as Mistress of Ceremonies.

Living Jazz, an Oakland based non-profit and producers of the MLK Tribute, originally created this award to acknowledge those who give of themselves beyond the call of duty and to inspire others to work for the betterment of the community. The recipient is chosen with the help of Oakland’s Human Services Department, and in the spirit of Dr. King’s tireless efforts, is presented annually at “In the Name of Love”, the Annual Musical Tribute honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Operation Dignity’s Executive Director and Vietnam war veteran, Alex McElree, has dedicated his life to ensure that no veteran suffers the indignity of homelessness and isolation upon their return home. After returning from three tours of duty in Vietnam, Alex lost everything. He became homeless, battled alcoholism and experienced trauma from war experiences.

Once he recognized the acute needs of other homeless veterans, he vowed to do what he could to house and support them. Starting with only his Social Security check, Alex rented a house in Oakland, bought some beds and invited a few veterans to his home. Operation Dignity was born.

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News from:
Human Services
Department

Oakland Citizen
Humanitarian Award

January 5, 2016

Page Two

From its pioneering start in 1993, Operation Dignity has grown to a veteran-run, service-enriched 501(c)(3) non-profit, serving homeless veterans and their families, as well as homeless population of Alameda County, CA. Former and current Operation Dignity residents help operate its housing facilities by providing peer support to other veterans and supporting day-to-day operations. Many former residents are now even employed by Operation Dignity.

Alex's contributions to the veterans' community are a testament to his personal determination and leadership. In 2009, the California Legislature Assembly selected Alex McElree as the **16th District Veteran of the Year** for his work.

"In the Name of Love", Oakland's only non-denominational musical tribute to Dr. King, is the perfect platform in which to honor Alex McElree, this year's recipient of the Oakland Citizen Humanitarian Award and a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge a member from our own community helping to inspire change and positive contribution.

Tickets: \$25-\$40, children 12 and under- \$8-\$12

For tickets and more info: <http://www.mlktribute.com> or call 510-858-5313.

Scottish Rite Center is wheelchair accessible.

"In the Name of Love" has been made possible through the generosity of the National Endowment for the Arts; California Arts Council; City of Oakland Cultural Funding Program; Walter and Elise Haas Fund; SF Foundation; Thomas J. Long Foundation; William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; Alameda County Arts Commission; Zellerbach Family Foundation; See's Candies; BART, and KRON 4.

Living Jazz, a non-profit Oakland based organization was created in 1984. Our mission is to empower children and adults, inspire creative growth, and unite diverse communities. Living Jazz created Jazz Camp West in 1984, the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir in 1986, Jazz Camp Weekend and the Oakland Jazz Choir in 1992, "In the Name of Love" in 2002, the Living Jazz Children's Project in 2005; Jam Camp West for youth ages 10-15 in 2008; and Jazz Search West, the Bay Area's Jazz Talent Search in 2010.

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