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LEADING THE FIGHT TO SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACES!!

The National Council for Occupational Safety and Health is a federation of local and statewide "COSH" groups - Committees/Coalitions on Occupational Safety and Health. COSH groups are private, non-profit coalitions of labor unions, health and technical professionals, and others interested in promoting and advocating for worker health and safety.

COSH organizations around the U.S. are committed to promoting worker health and safety through training, education, and advocacy.

There is a dawn approaching that is indicating and shouting to us that it's our moment. But we've got to seize that moment and use what we know so well how to organize and, fundamentally, how to fight!

- Tony Mazzocchi

FEATURED SPEAKER

Linda Rae Murray, MD, MPH

Dr. Murray has spent her career serving the medically underserved. She has worked in a variety of settings including practicing Occupational Medicine at a Workers Clinic in Canada, Residency Director for Occupational Medicine at Meharry Medical College, Bureau Chief for the Chicago Department of Health under Mayor Harold Washington. Dr. Murray served as Medical Director of the federally funded health center, Winfield Moody, serving Cabrini Green Public Housing Project in Chicago. Dr. Murray has been an active member of a wide range of local and national organizations including serving as a member of the Board of Scientific Counselors for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and the Board of Scientific Counselors for the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Board of Directors of Trinity Health (a large Catholic Health System). She serves on the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety & Health (NACOSH).

In 1997 Dr. Murray returned to the Cook County Health System where she served as Chief Medical Officer - Primary Care for the 23 primary care and community health centers comprising the Ambulatory & Community Health Network of the Cook County Bureau of Health Services. The Cook County Bureau of Health is one of the nation's largest public system of medical care and operates three hospitals, the public health department for suburban Cook County, health services a County Jail and the network of health Centers (ACHN) operated by the County. Today she serves as the Chief Medical officer for the Cook County Department of Public Health of the Cook County Health & Hospital System , the state certified public health agency for suburban Cook County. She practices as a general internist at Woodlawn Health Center, is an attending physician in the Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Cook County Hospital and an adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois School of Public Health (Occupational & Environmental Health and the Health Policy & Administration Departments). She plays a leadership role in many organizations including NACCHO's (National Association of City & County Health Officers) Health Equity & Social Justice Team, the national executive board of American Public Health Association and serves on the board of the Chicago based Health and Medicine Policy Research Group. She remains passionate about increasing the number of Black and Latino health professionals and serves as the co-chair for the Urban Health Program Community Advisory Committee at the University of Illinois.

In November, 2010 Dr. Murray became President of the American Public Health Association. She has been a voice for social justice and health care as a basic human right for over forty years.



PROGRAM

October 28, 2011

7:00pm-9:30pm

Dinner

Introduction, Welcoming Remarks

**Presentation of the National COSH
Community Service Award**

Rebecca Fuentes
Katherine Rodriguez

**Presentation of the National COSH Service
Awards**

Kathy Black
John Pajak

**Presentation of the National COSH
Tony Mazzochi Awards**

Joseph "Chip" Hughes
Michael Lax, MD, MPH

Featured Speaker

Linda Rae Murray, MD, MPH

Closing Remarks



**Rebecca Fuentes
National COSH Community
Service Award**

Rebecca is the coordinator for The Workers' Center of CNY worker center in Syracuse NY. Last year she was responsible for helping a group of H2B workers at the New York State Fair who were working under slavery conditions, experiencing both health & safety and wage & hour violations. As a result of her efforts, the workers received \$115,000 in back wages, and the employer received a \$50,000 fine and was charged with human trafficking.

Rebecca's work with the help of other interested activists resulted in an article by the Syracuse newspaper – The Post Journal. Here is the introduction to that article – “In three booths at last year's New York State Fair, 19 men worked in conditions close to slavery. They made and sold chicken gyros and french fries for 16 to 18 hours a day with a 15-minute break and one meal. They were paid \$1 an hour. They slept nine or 10 men to one bug-infested trailer, sometimes two to a bed. Some became ill. They worked like this for 11 days at the fair.

On the 12th day — Labor Day — they worked 24 hours in a row, according to a federal criminal complaint against their boss. The boss held a legal hammer over their heads: The workers, here legally from Mexico, would violate their visas if they quit their jobs. They'd be deported. They would never get back into the country legally.”

Rebecca Fuentes' role in this is also especially noteworthy not only because of her deep listening and respect for the workers' decisions about what course of action to pursue, but also because she had formed relationships of advocacy prior to these abuses, and her credibility had been established. Her on-going connection with these workers has been critical to the outcome. She continues to work the problem of systemic worker abuses in the fair and carnival industry. Rebecca's quick action with fellow activists shows that worker justice can prevail to challenge the abuses that occur daily in this country.



**Michael Lax, MD, MPH
National COSH Tony
Mazzocchi Award.**

Michael is an especially fitting honoree because, like Tony, he is a lifetime health and safety activist who has always situated his OSH work within the broader movement for workers' rights and justice.

Michael's activism has taken place at the grassroots in a primarily rural area in central New York where he has been medical director of the CNY Occupational Health Clinical Center since it was established in 1988. Under Michael's leadership CNYOHCC has almost doubled in size now serving 26 counties. Michael is CNYOHCC's sole physician diagnosing or treating 1,500 patients each year for work-related illnesses and injuries.

Michael's activism is also reflected in his time-consuming and effective efforts seeking compensation for worker victims of workplace disease. His compelling testimony, documentation and successful advocacy in hundreds of workers' compensation cases over the years have been a “game changer” – legitimate compensation claims for long term chemical exposures and repetitive strain injuries are now routinely won and often not even challenged as they had been previously. He has also committed substantial Clinic resources to outreach to underserved populations, particularly migrant farm workers. In addition he has given hundreds of OSH presentations and training sessions to workers.

Situating his OSH activism within a broader socio-economic framework Michael has been central to the establishment of the Labor-Religion Coalition of Central NY and more recently the Workers Center of Central New York. Another example of Michael's activism is a documentary film he co-produced, “Paso del Norte.” Using the workers own words it explores events both before and after a 2005 explosion which ripped through a house in rural NY, injuring ten migrant farm workers and killing one.

A short summary cannot do justice to all of Michael's work on behalf of working people, but does give you the core of why we believe he is a deserving recipient of the 2011 Tony Mazzocchi Award.



Joseph "Chip" Hughes
2011 National COSH Tony Mazzocchi Award

Joseph "Chip" Hughes is currently director of an innovative federal safety and health training program based at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). The program supports model safety and health training programs for workers involved in hazardous substances response with numerous universities, unions, community colleges and other non-profit organizations throughout the nation.

For the past twenty-five years, Mr. Hughes has worked in both the private and public sectors in developing environmental and occupational health education programs for workers and citizens in high-risk occupations and communities. Having done early work with the

Carolina Brown Lung Coalition and other organizations, Chip has been a leader in providing resources and vision to programs that empower workers. He pioneered efforts to create new methods and approaches for conducting needs assessments, reaching underserved populations, developing training partnerships and creating innovative program evaluation and assessment measures.

With a history in the labor movement, Mr. Hughes worked for the UMWA in Harlan County strike against Duke Power in 1975, worked on strategies for the unionization campaign at JP Stevens in 1976, and a founder of NCOSH in 1976. In addition, he prepared the Report to Congress on Occupational Disease Compensation from the US Department of Labor in 1980.

Mr. Hughes was given the DHHS Secretary's Award for Exceptional Service in November 2001 for his role in responding to the World Trade Center attacks. After the NIEHS response to the Katrina disaster, Mr. Hughes was given the DHHS Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service in June 2006. Following his involvement in the response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill advocating for proper worker training, he received the 2011 NIH Director's Award. Under Mr. Hughes' leadership, NIEHS grant support of \$40 million is annually committed for the development and administration of model worker health and safety training programs consisting of classroom, hands-on, on-line, computer-based and practical health and safety training of workers and their supervisors engaged in hazardous materials and emergency response activities. These projects have gone beyond their program goals by being part of a community that nurtures collective learning and sharing between grantees. The emphasis on Peer Training and Training of Trainers has expanded the impact of these programs to the Occupational Health and Safety community.

Katherine Rodriguez
National COSH Community Service Award

Katherine Rodriguez joined the families of USMWF in 2006 and was appointed to the National COSH board in 2010. Katherine's awareness about occupational health and safety issues came painfully after her dad, Raymundo [Ray] Rodriguez was killed in a double fatality workplace incident in 2004 at BP Oil Refinery in Texas City, TX. Unfortunately, this is the same workplace that was the site of the mass explosion at BP that killed 15 workers in 2005. Katherine's voice has reminded us that BP's health and safety problems did not start with the 2005 explosion.

In August 2006, Katherine became a volunteer board of director for the COM Foundation to help raise matching funds from the settlement of Eva Rowe's case against BP in 2007. Eva lost both of her parents in the 2005 explosion and won a substantial settlement from BP.

In August 2006, 2007 and 2008, Katherine created and erected a billboard outside of the BP Texas City Refinery. In an attempt to remind local residents of the two men who lost their lives in a preventable workplace incident, the billboard read "United Support and Memorial for Workplace Fatalities - We Remember September 2, 2004 - In Loving Memory of Ray and Maurice."

In March 2010, Katherine attended the historic OSHA Listens event in Washington D.C. to testify in public with her family about the personal and community loss that every workplace fatality involves.

In April 2010, OSHA held the first ever Summit for Latino Health and Safety. Katherine helped organize her sisters, Jennifer and Randy to meet with Regional OSHA Directors to relay some of the family's difficulties in dealing with the organization. Katherine, her mother Mary and her sister Jennifer attended the opening day of the summit, which included a keynote address by Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis to make sure that families are included in the health and safety world.

Katherine is described by her family as true loyalty, strength, faith, determination, love, amazing, and inspiring; every single one of her family members have stated Katherine is literally the glue that has held their family together in their joint activism to inspire and console other families who have lost loved ones.

Katherine is tireless in her efforts, volunteering her time to anyone who asks, writing letters and speaking to anyone who listens. This is all done while holding an important job at a local bank and contributing her skills to organizations such as National COSH. Katherine's selfless goal is to keep another family from suffering a loss in the workplace.





Kathy Black National COSH Service Award

Kathy Black was born and raised in a Union family in North Philadelphia. She joined SEIU Local 503 in 1978 while working as a secretary at the University of Oregon. Within two months she was elected Recording Secretary of the University

Chapter of the Union. Kathy graduated Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, with a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and Labor Studies from the University of Oregon in 1983. For the next three years, she worked as a Staff Representative for SEIU Local 503. She then moved to the San Francisco area, where she worked as a Business Agent for a small union of public utility workers and health care professionals (Engineers and Scientists of California, IFPTE). In 1988, Kathy moved home to Philadelphia and spent eight years representing New Jersey State employees in the Department of Health for CWA Local 1034 in Trenton, NJ. In January 1997 she began her current job as Occupational Health and Safety Director at AFSCME District Council 47 in Philadelphia.

She was elected Chairperson of the PhilaPOSH Board this past June, the second time she has held that position. She joined the Board over 20 years while she was still a representative for a CWA Local in New Jersey, making her the longest serving Board member. You will usually find Kathy in the field doing an inspection of a city library that has mold or some other city building where members work; or in a meeting with the Council 47 Health and Safety Advisory Committee; or resolving a compensation problem for an injured member; or speaking at a rally for earned sick days or for a fair contract. She is also President of the Philadelphia Chapter of CLUW, is a National Coordinator of US Labor against the War, and a member of the Philadelphia AFL-CIO Executive Board. She is one of the loudest and most progressive voices for all workers' rights, for women's rights, and for peace and justice in the greater Philadelphia region.

John Pajak National COSH Service Award

John Pajak, a rank and file member of Teamsters Local 877 employed at the Conoco-Phillips refinery in Linden, NJ, has been a leader in winning landmark state and national policies that expand the rights of workers and their unions to participate in environmental inspections, thus protecting workers and communities.



A few years ago, after OSHA found violations by Conoco-Phillips of their Process Safety Management Standard, John's local filed a complaint with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Toxic Catastrophe Prevention Program requesting an inspection to help protect plant neighbors. But when DEP arrived, they notified management, but not the union. And while they interviewed many management personnel, they didn't talk to a single worker! Unsurprisingly, they found no violations.

Based on this experience, John came up with the idea that workers and union representatives should have a right to fully participate in environmental inspections, just like we do with OSHA inspections.

In 2005, working with Lisa Jackson, then Assistant Commissioner for Enforcement of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, John's leadership won a state policy to engage workers during inspections to prevent catastrophic chemical risks. This applied to 100 industrial plants using extremely hazardous chemicals and resulted in important safety improvements.

Subsequently, John's leadership of a multi-year effort with 106 labor, environmental, and community organizations, including all the COSHs, won a new policy from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ensuring worker participation. Employees and their union representatives now have new rights across the nation to participate during EPA inspections and to help identify risks to prevent chemical releases from approximately 13,000 of the nation's most dangerous industrial facilities.

These policies are the nation's first to involve workers in such environmental protection efforts. John Pajak played a pivotal role in winning these landmark policies.