

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 9, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- From planting vegetable gardens in empty dirt lots for South LA residents to a young entrepreneur empowering East LA teenagers with solid business skills, to a human trafficking survivor working tirelessly to end the cycle of violence against women. These are just a few of the stories behind the honorees of the [2013 Unsung Heroes of Los Angeles Awards](#), presented by the California Community Foundation (CCF) on October 9 at Club Nokia at LA Live. Each honoree received a grant in their name to the nonprofit organization of their choice.

"These five courageous and enterprising people truly represent CCF's Unsung Heroes because of their extraordinary efforts of philanthropy that are bringing new resources to people in Los Angeles County," said Antonia Hernandez, chief executive officer of CCF. "We are honored to recognize them for the impact they have made to improve lives of those most in need and hope that their compassion and advocacy will inspire others."

Unsung Heroes celebrated include:

- **Ron Finley** - [The Ron Finley Project](#). A green activist in South LA who installs gardens in unused and to transform neighborhoods one step at a time.

[View Ron's story](#)

- **Maria Suarez** - As a teen, she was "bought" by her employer and held captive as his slave for five years, then sent to prison for a crime she didn't commit. Now Maria is working tirelessly against human trafficking. [View Maria's Story](#)

Acts Of Courage And Leadership Recognized By California Community Foundation

Written by Australian Business

- **Ezequiel Olvera** - [Gumball Foundation](#) , helps teenagers in East LA acquire business skills in real-life working situations and earn an income to pay college.

[View Ezequiel's Story](#)

- **Sophie Alpert** - [Piece By Piece](#) Launched a mosaic art workshop to assist homeless and underserved residents earn additional income through their own art.

[View Sophie's story](#)

- **Donald Manelli** - [Care Harbor](#) , provides families without insurance coverage a top quality medical and dental care experience by bringing medical resources to those living in poverty.

[View Donald's Story](#)

[California Community Foundation \(CCF\)](#) is a public, charitable organization serving Los Angeles County

in multiple capacities since 1915. It advances philanthropy and serves as a steward of charitable funds and legacies. It makes grants to nonprofits and collaborates in addressing the critical needs of vulnerable populations. It actively engages in community problem solving with business, civic, government and other organizations.

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