

NEWS

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LIBERTY BANK PRESENTS WILLARD M. MCRAE COMMUNITY DIVERSITY AWARD TO MARIA CAMPOS-HARLOW



Liberty Bank has presented Maria Campos-Harlow with the 2015 Willard M. McRae Community Diversity Award. Maria, executive director of the Spanish Community of Wallingford (SCOW), received her award from bank officials at a gala reception Wednesday night that was attended by some 150 friends, family members, bank officers, and community leaders. Maria was invited to direct a \$5,000 donation from the Liberty Bank Foundation to the organization of her choice and was able to split it between three programs within SCOW: Adelante! America Youth Leadership Program, Mariachi Academy of Connecticut, WECARE. Pictured L-R: Maria Campos-Harlow, Executive Director of SCOW; Chandler Howard, President and CEO, Liberty Bank; Evangeline Mendoza, Music Program Director; Adriana Rodriguez, Program Director; Roberta Clouet, Program Coordinator.

MIDDLETOWN, CT — Liberty Bank has presented Maria Campos-Harlow with the 2015 Willard M. McRae Community Diversity Award. Harlow, executive director of the Spanish Community of Wallingford (SCOW), received her award from bank officials at a gala reception Wednesday night that was attended by some 150 friends, family members, bank officers, and community leaders.

“In choosing the recipient of the award, we look not just for people who have given their time in service to community organizations, but for those who have made it their mission to make opportunities available to all,” said Chandler J. Howard, president and CEO of Liberty Bank. “There is not a shadow of a doubt that Maria Campos-Harlow is such a person.”

Introduced in 2001 as the Liberty Bank Community Diversity Award, this award was renamed in 2009 in honor of Willard M. McRae, a past chairman and board member of Liberty Bank. It is designed to recognize an individual who has been a leader in the communities served by Liberty Bank in connecting people who are different—whether those differences are of religion, race, ethnicity, economic status, age, or any other aspect of diversity.

As this year’s award recipient, Harlow was able to direct a \$5,000 charitable donation from the Liberty Bank Foundation to the nonprofit organizations of her choice. She selected three organizations within SCOW to share the donation: Adelante! America Youth Leadership Program, Mariachi Academy of Connecticut, and WE CARE.

Nominated by her colleague, Sunnie Scarpa, the Head of Children’s Services at the Wallingford Public Library, Scarpa praised Harlow as a “dynamic and visible leader in our region, and though she represents the Spanish speaking community in her work at SCOW, Maria is an advocate for diversity on all levels.”

As executive director of SCOW, Harlow takes a place at the table in almost every community-wide conversation: from working with Wallingford Public Schools to serving on the Board of the Wallingford Committee on Aging. Harlow is also involved with the Wallingford Board for Youth, Midstate Medical Center, Wallingford Adult Education Advisory Board, WECARE Council, Meriden chamber of Commerce, Activate Wallingford Steering Committee, Emergency Management Advisory Council, Wallingford Forum, and Coalition for a Better Wallingford. Beyond Wallingford, Harlow has served on the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Association for United Spanish Action, Inc. (CAUSA), the Board of Directors of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT), and the American Translators Association (ATA).

Programs that thrive under Harlow’s leadership include:

- **Adelante America Youth Leadership Program**, which provides support to students in middle and high school, dealing with the challenges of adolescence in immigrant families, and preparing them for the independence and responsibilities of adulthood.
- **Wallingford Early Childhood Alliance Resources & Education (WECARE)**, is a bilingual playgroup for pre-K children, parents, and grandparents get together to participate in activities designed to enhance school readiness and success.
- **The Escuela Guadalupana de Musica** provides music training to children ages seven to seventeen, and promotes traditional Mexican Folk music.
- **STEM Leadership Enrichment Academy**, designs Family Science Nights that provide students and their parents with an introduction to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

State Representative Mary Mushinsky was kind enough to send a citation in Maria’s honor, as did the Honorable William Dickenson, Jr., Mayor of Wallingford, declaring December 9, 2015 as “Maria Campos-Harlow Day”.

“Maria’s vivacious personality, tireless work ethic, and passionate advocacy for the Hispanic community have been transformational in Wallingford and beyond. She has devoted her life to showing us that we enrich our community with our differences, and unite it with our commitment.” said Chandler Howard in presenting the award. “Maria is a community leader who creates pathways that lead people of all ages to embrace their heritage and achieve their dreams.”

Harlow is the fifteenth recipient of the Community Diversity Award. Previous winners are listed at the end of this release.

Established in 1825, Liberty Bank is Connecticut’s oldest mutual bank, with more than \$3.9 billion in assets and 48 banking offices throughout the central, eastern, and shoreline areas of the state. As a full-service financial institution, Liberty offers consumer and commercial banking, home mortgages, insurance, and investment services. Rated outstanding by federal regulators on its community reinvestment efforts, Liberty maintains a longstanding commitment to superior personal service and unparalleled community involvement.

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Previous Recipients of the Willard M. McRae Community Diversity Award

- 2014** **Sara Chaney, New London**
Union Counselor, United Way/AFL-CIO
Board Member, Child and Family Agency
Treasurer NAACP
Volunteer, New London Community Meals Center
- 2013** **Teresa C. Younger, Shelton**
Executive Director, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Former President of the board of the Girl Scouts of Connecticut
- 2012** **Elsa Núñez, Windham**
President, Eastern Connecticut State University
Founder, Dual College Enrollment Initiative, the Academic Services Center, and the Center for Community Engagement at Eastern
- 2011** **Jacqueline Owens, Lebanon**
President, Norwich NAACP
Co-founder, Norwich Special People Reaching Out To Students Program
Co-founder, Greater Norwich Bully Buster Coalition
- 2010** **Ulysses B. Hammond, Waterford**
President, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Trust Fund
Co-Founder and Co-Chair, New London Tutoring for Success Program
Chairman, Lawrence & Memorial Hospital
Founder, Minority Student Support Program, Connecticut College
- 2009** **Willard M. McRae, Middletown**
Past chairman and past director, Liberty Bank
Founding member, Liberty Bank Foundation Board of Directors
Co-founder, Middlesex Coalition for Children
Co-founder, Middlesex Child and Adolescent Services System Program
Co-founder, Wesleyan University's Upward Bound Program
- 2008** **Alejandro Melendez-Cooper, New London**
Director, Community Health Centers of Groton and New London
Founder, Hispanic Alliance of Southeastern Connecticut
- 2007** **Arthur Meyers, Middletown**
Director of the Russell Library
Chair, International Exchange Committee of the Middletown Rotary Club
- 2006** **Catina Caban-Owen, Windham**
Social worker, Windham Public Schools
Advocate for equal access to education and healthcare
- 2005** **Joseph Sheffey, Uncasville**
Founder of Child Adoption Resource Association, an adoption agency focusing on interracial placements
- 2004** **Lydia Brewster, Haddam Neck**
Community activist and founder of Middletown's North End Action Team

- 2003** **Ramón Ortiz**, Willimantic
Community activist and service coordinator for Village Heights Apartments, a non-profit housing complex for low-income families
- 2002** **Jane Glover**, New London
Founder of Kenté Enterprises and former mayor of New London
- 2001** **Claire Gaudiani**, New London
President of Connecticut College and the New London Development Corporation