

From: The Honorable Fred Keeley,
Santa Cruz County Treasurer, Former Speaker Pro Tem. of the California Assembly
121 Market Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
fred.keeley@co.santa-cruz.ca.us
(831) 454-2397

Date: May 26, 2008

RE: Recommendation for Barbara Graves

To Whom It May Concern:

I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Barbara Graves for nearly a decade in her community service activities. She is enthusiastic, dedicated, dependable, organized, thorough, and resourceful in her work. She combines her professional experience as a teacher, dancer, technical writer and researcher in creative ways that benefit her community and the environment. I would recommend her for any position utilizing those qualities and skills.

A good example of Barbara's style and ability is "Traffic Busters in Schools," a non-profit all-volunteer organization Barbara designed and led. (See <http://www.trafficbusters.org/> for a program overview.) The idea began with Barbara's deep concern about decreasing air quality and its increasing impacts on children. Appointed by Capitola's Mayor to the Advisory Committee of the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, Barbara thoroughly researched local air-quality constituents and outlined possible improvement sectors. She then devised a clever "Smart Sneaker Week" kick-off to introduce the "Walking School Bus" concept with fun and educational activities to encourage students and their parents to walk to school. The program was successfully piloted in six Santa Cruz County elementary schools with measurable reductions in traffic-generated air pollution over a three-year period. She managed a small army of volunteer teachers of all ages (from 5 years old to 65) to go into classrooms to introduce the program's basic concepts. Barbara wrote and secured her first grant to cover the cost of materials, advertising, and prizes for the schools. Along the way, she built a coalition of public agencies, parents, police, school and other public officials endorsing the program for reasons of reducing childhood obesity and improving pedestrian safety as well as her original environmental goals. The art produced by school children who participated in the program has adorned public libraries for years.

Characteristic of her accomplishments, most people never knew that Barbara Graves originated and coordinated Traffic Busters in Schools. However, some recognition came her way when the Santa Cruz Sentinel newspaper gave her an editorial "thumbs-up" for the program. For another non-profit organization Barbara founded (WAVE, Working to Advance the Village Environment), the Capitola Chamber of Commerce awarded her their 1999 Citizen of the Year prize and the Metro newspaper similarly recognized her. For her volunteer efforts in spearheading an online self-help system for California activists and her statewide service to the CDP Environmental Caucus, Barbara was presented with the Gordon Haskel Award and the Regional Volunteer of the Year for 2004, the Santa Cruz County Democrat of the Year for 2005, and last year's prestigious Bob Hattoy Environmental Activist Award for the state of California.

Currently I am working with Barbara to involve residents in a statewide network concerned with issues of Environmental Justice.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments, and thank you for your consideration of Barbara Graves for employment.

Sincerely,

Fred Keeley