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South El Monte Non-Profit Honored by Congresswoman Chu

By Erick Galindo
Correspondent

The Lincoln Training Center last Sunday was honored as *DiverCities* Non-Profit of the Year by Rep. Judy Chu (D-Calif.) for its work helping adults with disabilities throughout California find “meaningful” work.

“Lincoln was extremely honored to be recognized by Congresswoman Judy Chu,” said Caron Nunez, The Center’s president. “Seventy percent of people with disabilities are unemployed. Lincoln was recognized for providing employment for people with disabilities through partnering with employers.”

The South El Monte-based organization received the award during the first-annual *Diver-Cities* Awards ceremony held

at the Rosemead Community Center.

The awards honor outstanding individuals and organizations that contribute to diversity and minority development in the 32nd District, which Chu Represents.

“The Lincoln Training Center has served the people of El Monte for nearly 50 years now,” Chu said. “It empowers residents to gain training and take advantage of meaningful opportunities.”

The Center began its work in 1964, as a small group of parents teaching their disabled sons and daughters simple production work.

Today, it provides work opportunities and job training for hundreds of people with developmental disabilities. The Center also offers a transi-



Honorees at the first annual Diver-Cities Awards, included Lincoln Training Center (LTC Client Amy Longthorne, President Caron Nunez, and Client Michael Garcia on right).

tion program designed to train special education students from ages 15-22 as part of their high school curriculum.

“Companies hire people with disabilities because it makes good business sense,” Nunez noted. “The person with a disability brings unique attributes and experiences that enrich the employers’ entire workforce. A diverse workforce is not just the right thing to do – it’s the smart thing to do.”

Chu noted the importance of The Center to the community she represents, adding that she is proud that it is part of the district.

The 32nd Congressional District includes the parts of East Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley including the city of South El Monte.

The former council woman and mayor of Monterey Park, Chu was elected last year to fill the seat of Hilda Solis, who left Congress after her appointment

as secretary of labor by President Obama.

According to Chu, who is Chinese American, the awards were designed to highlight the vast diversity of her district, which is 62 percent Hispanic, 18 percent Asian, 15 percent White, and 3 percent Black. Chu also noted the cultural, ethnic and personal diversity that makes up the district’s community.

“It’s a unique melting pot of different cultures and ways of life that reflect the spirit of diversity of the 32nd District, and the nation as a whole.

Despite the diversity of her constituency, Chu believes there is an underlying set of values that ties the community together.

“What we strive to have here in the San Gabriel Valley is a group of people who want to live together, who want to work side-by-side with one another and understand one another’s culture.”



LTC President Caron Nunez, Congressmember Judy Chu, and LTC client Michael Garcia.