

For Immediate Release

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Sonia Graham awarded City of Newport's Elton Pier Award

Sonia Graham was posthumously awarded the Elton Pier Award by the City of Newport at the city's annual employee appreciation dinner this past weekend. Graham, who passed away in October, was the 60+ Center Supervisor, and played a key role in establishing the 60+ Center's presence as a significant community resource, including activities and programming to encourage active participation and inclusivity. The award was accepted by her husband, Jim Graham.

The Elton Pier Award is named in honor of a long-time city employee and volunteer firefighter. The award is given annually to an individual exhibiting many of the qualities exhibited by Elton Pier, including: dependability; hard work; resourcefulness; compassion; motivation of others; and a commitment to public service through volunteerism and city employment. A committee then reviews nominations made by City of Newport employees to determine the recipient.

"Sonia's commitment to every community member in Newport, and her continuous work to assist and benefit others in all ways possible is the true embodiment of the Elton Pier Award," stated Newport City Manager Nina Vetter. "Everyone at the city is honored to have all worked with her and learned from her, and it is our goal to continue positive impacts throughout the city in her spirit, especially at the 60+ Center."

Through her work at the 60+ Center, membership and programming flourished. Graham grew Newport's free Thanksgiving meal tradition, which served over 200 community members annually, and introduced events such as monthly birthday lunches combat the epidemic of loneliness in senior and Veteran communities.

Beyond the 60+ Center, Graham also was a caring community figure who earned numerous awards and recognitions due to the positive impact she had on countless people through her other work. She was a co-founder of the CoastBusters Walk for Breast Cancer that benefits breast cancer patients and programs in Lincoln County and coastal cities in Lane County. She was also proudly involved in, and a previous President of, Rotary Club of Newport.

A number of other City of Newport employees were recognized at the event, including 2024 retirees John Johnson, Spencer Nebel and Linda Wertman.

Staff members receiving service time recognition were:

35 Years:

Steve Stewart

30 Years:

Jason Malloy

25 Years:

Tyson Haynes

15 Years:

Derrick Tokos

10 Years:

Luckey Carter

Barb James

Jean-Paul Lacy

5 Years:

Anita Albrecht

Chelsey Comstock

Lillian Curanzy

Stephanie Kerns

Laura Kimberly

Patty Riley

Catherine Stover

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