



California Safe Schools Executive Director Named One Of Nation's Top Hometown Heroes

Volvo for Life Awards

([PRWEB](#)) February 18, 2005 -- Robina Suwol named a finalist in the Third Annual Volvo for life Award for advocating policies to protect school children from harmful chemicals

Celebrity Judges - Including Hank Aaron and Paul Newman Will Select and Announce Winners at March 24 Volvo for Life Awards Ceremony in Times Square;

One Hero Will Receive a Volvo Car for Life

Van Nuys, Calif. (Feb. 16, 2005) - Robina Suwol, a Van Nuys mother, who after seeing her children enter their school through a toxic cloud of pesticide spray, created California Safe Schools, an organization that put in place the most stringent pesticide policy in the nation for schools, has been named a finalist in the Third Annual Volvo for life Awards. As a finalist, she is guaranteed to receive a \$25,000 charitable contribution, with a chance to receive a \$50,000 donation and a Volvo every three years for life.

The Volvo for life Awards is the nation's largest search for and celebration of everyday heroes, with Volvo Cars of North America providing \$1 million annually in awards and contributions.

The distinguished judges' panel, including the experts on care, conscience and character Hank Aaron, Bill Bradley, Caroline Kennedy, Maya Lin, Paul Newman, Dr. Sally Ride, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, will now review Morales and eight other finalists to select the program's top three winners in the categories of safety, environment and quality of life.

In 1998, Robina watched her sons walk through a white cloud near the entrance of their school, where the school gardener, dressed in full protective gear, was spraying pesticide. Suwol's youngest son had a severe asthma attack, causing Suwol to take action. She quickly contacted medical experts, environmentalists, scientists and experts to learn more about safer, more effective methods of using of chemicals around school children. She presented her findings to the Los Angeles Unified School District, and with full support, she brought together parents, physicians, environmentalists and the county health department, among other stakeholders, to form California Safe Schools.

The organization persuaded the school district - the second largest in the country - to adopt the "most stringent school pesticide policy in the nation." The policy was the first in the United States to embrace the "precautionary principle" and "Parents' Right to Know" about chemicals being used in or around school campuses. The policy has benefited the nearly one million students, 60,000 teachers and thousands of staff members in the district, as well as the health and well- being of all Californians. In fact, the policy led to the California Healthy Schools Act of 2000, which recommends school districts develop Integrated Pest Management Policies. And today, the policy is being replicated nationally.

This year's Volvo program, launched in June 2004, called for individuals nationwide to nominate a hometown hero at www.volvoforlifeawards.com



<http://www.volvoforlifeawards.com>

Volvo received 4,272 nominations representing all 50 states.

Volvo will fly the three category winners and six remaining finalists to New York for the Volvo for life Awards Times Square Studios, Ltd. ceremony on March 24, 2005. At the event, Volvo and program judges will present each winner with a \$50,000 contribution to the charity of his or her choice. In addition, they will announce the program's grand winner, who will receive a new Volvo car every three years for the rest of his or her life and the distinction of "America's Greatest Hometown Hero." The six remaining finalists will each receive a donation of \$25,000 to the charities of their choice.

"Each year with the Volvo for life Awards, we seek to not only recognize everyday heroes, but to likewise inspire others to do good in their communities," said Vic Doolan, president and chief executive officer of Volvo Cars of North America. "While Suwol and the other finalists' stories are unique, they share a passion for creating change within their communities that will have lasting impacts for generations to come."

The third annual Volvo for life Awards will be hosted by actor Jim Belushi and will feature musical performances and celebrity appearances. Visit www.volvoforlifeawards.com <http://www.volvoforlifeawards.com> for more information on the Volvo for life Awards and to view hundreds of nominee stories, including Suwol and this year's finalists:

Safety:

- Monica Caison, a Wilmington, N.C., woman who embodies the spirit of TV's "Cold Case" by helping search for missing loved ones when others have given up.
- Paula Lucas, a domestic abuse survivor in Portland, Ore., helping American women escape abusive relationships while living abroad.
- Abdul Hafiz, a Staten Island, N.Y., junior high student lobbying politicians to pass a new law requiring special safety gates for fire escapes.

Quality of Life:

- Hope Bevilhymmer, a West Jordan, Utah, amputee who is working to change U.S. laws that prohibit recycling prosthetic limbs.
- Jack Orchard, a St. Louis, Mo., ALS patient who inspires students across the nation to help people living with Lou Gehrig's disease.
- Jose Morales, Elmhurst, N.Y., who is helping more than 3,100 Spanish-speaking people in Queens, New York recover from substance abuse.

Environment:

- Lisa Busch, an Alaskan bringing environmentalists and timber proponents together to revitalize her community and the environment.
- Bill Maynard, a Sacramento, Calif., engineer growing gardens to beautify his community and feed low-income residents.

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Do you know a hero? Visit www.volvoforlifeawards.com

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