

## **Toxic-cleanup group honors Fairfielder**

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A Fairfield woman who played a key roll in getting the old [McKinley School](#) demolished because of mold and air-quality problems was honored in Boston recently by a group that advocates for the cleanup of toxins.

Charlotte Leslie, head of the old school's PTA when it was shut down in 2000, was honored by the Hartford-based [Toxin Action Center](#). She was named from among more than 100 nominees for one of the group's 25 Years of Victories Awards, the center said in a news release.

The awards recognized individuals for their leadership in cleaning up hazardous materials and protecting the health of their communities over the past quarter century.

With pervasive mold problems, the old [McKinley School](#) was razed in 2000 and a new school was built on the Thompson Street site.

Leslie also was a founding member in 2002 of the [Canary Committee](#), now known as [CT Foundation](#) for Environmentally [Safe Schools](#) or ConnFESS, the Toxin Action Center said. The group lobbied successfully for the Connecticut Legislature 2003 adoption of indoor air-quality legislation.

The Toxin Action Center also honored former a former teacher at the old McKinley School, [Joellen Lawson](#) of Newtown. Her 23 year career as a special education teacher ended in a disability retirement due to exposure to indoor air pollution at the old school, the Toxic Action Center said.

Award winners were chosen by a panel of environmental and public health professionals, the Toxic Action Center said.

The 25 Years of Victories Awards recognized 25 of the most successful local efforts to clean up or prevent toxic pollution across New England between 1987 and 2012, the group said. Those years correspond with the 25 years that [Toxics Action Center](#), an environmental group based in Hartford, has been working with neighborhoods and community leaders.

Toxics Action Center was founded in 1987 when contamination in Woburn, Mass., drinking water supplies was traced to chemicals at a [W.R. Grace Co.](#) facility, the center said. The center now has offices in all six New England states.

Read more: <http://www.fairfieldcitizenonline.com/news/article/Toxic-cleanup-group-honors-Fairfielder-3396386.php#ixzz1sOfuCVcs>