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Times Tribune Photo by Ellen Banner-Courtice

Letha Powell, honored by East Palo Alto and Menlo Park residents for her years of community service, shows the plaque she received at a luncheon. From left are Lillian

Woods, East Palo Alto, Ida Dorsey, East Palo Alto, Ruth Sampson, Menlo Park, Powell, East Palo Alto, Hortense Wright, East Palo Alto and Jo Fields, San Jose.

Letha Powell honored for helping children

By Ann Gibbons
Times Tribune Staff

EAST PALO ALTO — About 60 people attended a special luncheon in honor of Letha Powell Saturday, toasting her for her years of community service in the Children's Probation Department.

Mrs. Powell was commended by the East Palo Alto Municipal Council and was presented with a plaque by citizens who thanked her for her service.

Mrs. Powell is well known throughout the community for her exceptional work to help the children she works with and their families.

She frequently follows children's cases through the juvenile court system, long after her duties as a community social worker are completed, said Mrs. Hortense Wright, one of the organizers of the luncheon roast held in the Municipal Council Chambers.

At Christmas, for example,

Mrs. Powell took food baskets to many of the children's families and gave Christmas trees to needy families.

The high point of Saturday's ceremony was when Mrs. Powell's friends played a tape sent by Mrs. Powell's son who lives in New York.

"When her son told her how much he loved her and what a good mother she was, there wasn't a dry eye in the room," Mrs. Wright said. "It was just so touching."

Judge Frank Piombo from the Hillcrest Juvenile Court also spoke of Mrs. Powell's as a hard worker and a "wonderful person."

"Everyone said the same thing, so you had to know they could'nt be wrong," Mrs. Wright said.

Councilwoman Gertrude Wilks presided over the ceremony and Councilwoman Barbara Mouton presented Powell with the Council commendation.