

Inside People



2006 heroes (from left): Coy Decker, Taylor Crabtree, 16, Abel Delgado, 26, and Tracie Lee Dean, 35.


Our Kind of Heroes

Every week at PEOPLE, we bring readers the best and latest in celebrity goings-on. But we have also never wavered from our mission of—and passion for—covering the inspiring work of ordinary citizens. Americans give nearly \$250 billion a year to charitable causes, and growing numbers of people—65 million as of 2005—donate something just as valuable: their time. These men and women are our PEOPLE's Heroes Among Us. In this issue, beginning on page 80, we salute five extraordinary heroes from 2006 and introduce four new ones nominated online by our readers: people who are doing amazing work in their own hometowns to help others.

When our honorees met each other for the first time—at a Los Angeles photo shoot on Oct. 20—the happiness

flowed. "It's humbling being here," said Houston police officer Bob Decker, 54, whose passion is helping the desperately poor along Mexico's Texas border. "These people really care about others—they're the best." Echoing that sentiment was Helen "Sam" Coy, 27, who turns around at-risk teenagers in Boston: "Getting together with caring folks energizes the soul." We hope you will find our heroes' stories of courage and compassion as inspiring as we do. Perhaps they'll even prompt action in your own life—and neighborhood.

LARRY HACKETT, MANAGING EDITOR

 HEROES AMONG US, ON CBS AND PEOPLE.COM: TUNE IN TO CBS'S *THE EARLY SHOW* FROM OCT. 30 TO NOV. 3 TO SEE PROFILES OF THIS YEAR'S HEROES. STARTING OCT. 31, YOU CAN ALSO WATCH THE CLIPS AT WWW.PEOPLE.COM/HEROES2006