

ACTIVE HIV/AIDS VOLUNTEER AND RETIRED REGISTERED NURSE TO RECEIVE 2018 LEADERSHIP AWARD



Centennial, Colorado—Linda Girard, Tucson, Arizona, has been selected to receive the Center for Health and Hope’s 2018 Leadership Award for her extraordinary service as one of the most active and long-serving volunteers in Southern Arizona’s HIV community.

The award will be presented during the 4th Annual *Swinging@AIDS* benefit weekend – March 24/25. “Her compassion and competence combined with her altruistic spirit of generosity motivates others to follow her lead in reaching out to the marginalized and stigmatized,” stated the Rev. Dr. Donald E. Messer, Executive Director of the Center for Health and Hope. “The Center’s Board honors Linda and recognizes her husband, Jim, for their steadfast advocacy and support of equality and justice for LGBTQ people and people living with HIV.”

Scott Blades, the Executive Director of the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (TIHAN), commented, “Linda’s got an incredible heart for service. She’s one of the most committed and reliable volunteers we’ve ever had. She cares deeply, and gives so generously of her time and her skills. Our CarePartners living with HIV have the greatest respect for Linda, and we’re so thrilled that she’s being honored with this award.”

Girard has devoted the past 25 years to HIV awareness and support. A founding board member of TIHAN, she has been an organizational volunteer for the past 24 years. As chair of the HIV/AIDS Ministry at St. Mark’s United Methodist Church, she has helped raise thousands of dollars for TIHAN and the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF), plus ensuring the congregation provides desserts for the Food for Life meal program of SAAF.

Other volunteer service includes being a Co-Dean of Strength for the Journey, a United Methodist retreat for people living with and affected by HIV; Co-Chair of the HIV Caring Ministries of the United Methodist Church’s Desert Southwest Conference; and a former board member of PowerSourceTucson, a nonprofit serving women with HIV. Additionally, she is a volunteer ambassador for the Center for Health and Hope, Centennial, Colorado, helping to spearhead the annual Tucson *Swinging@AIDS* golf tournament and concert, which raise funds to support TIHAN and a school in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya.

In 2015, Linda and her husband Jim were honored with a Spirit of Philanthropy Award, nominated by TIHAN and presented by the Southern Arizona Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

The 2017 recipient of the Center Leadership Award was Kevin Carmichael, M.D., of Tucson. The Center funds projects around the world as it seeks to support and advocate for persons infected and affected by HIV and AIDS in the world through programs of education, prevention, care and treatment.

The 4th Annual *Swinging@AIDS* benefit Golf Tournament will be held on Saturday, March 24 at the El Conquistador Golf & Tennis at the Oro Valley Community Center, and the Benefit Concert featuring the Ronstadt Brothers will be at Monterey Court on Sunday, March 25 at 6:00pm.