



Recognition • Education • Achievement • Community Health

SINA 6th Annual REACH Awards Ceremony

Tuesday, May 29, 2012

Hartford Hospital's
Education Resource Center
Hartford, CT



Program



Master of Ceremony

Steve Balcanoff
Manager, Non-Medical Services
Connecticut Children's Medical Center



Greetings from Host Institution

Jeffrey Flaks
President & CEO
Hartford Hospital



Greetings from SINA

Jane Baird
Chairperson
Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance



Dinner



Awards Presentation

Ivan A. Backer Scholarship
Richardson Brancato Scholarship
Neighborhood Service Award
Institutional Award



Closing Remarks



SINA / Ivan A. Backer Scholarship



2012 Scholarship Recipients



From left to right: Stephen Naing, Marie Angely Rosa, and Jamal Nixon

Stephen Naing

"I am thankful to SINA for giving me this opportunity to continue my higher education and assisting me in achieving my goals." Stephen plans to attend CCSU to pursue a career in the medical field.

Marie Angely Rosa

"I am grateful to the SINA organization for making it possible for me to attend school." Marie Angely plans to attend UCONN to pursue a career as a Nurse.

Jamal Nixon

"I would like to thank SINA very much for aiding and assisting me in the furthering of my education." Jamal plans to attend UCONN- West Hartford Campus to pursue a career in Business.



Richardson Brancato Scholarship

Rhama Khadeer

Rhama plans to continue her education at Capital Community College to pursue a career as a Pediatrician.

She will receive a scholarship donation of \$2,000 from Thomas C. Richardson, Vice President of Strategic Planning at Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

Neighborhood Service Award



The Neighborhood Service Awards recognizes individuals in the community who have made outstanding contributions to Hartford neighborhoods.



Nilda Fernandez

Nilda Fernandez is a social worker for UConn and the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, providing direct service to children, youth, and women infected with or affected by HIV. She provides case management, outreach, prevention, and social support to her client families. Nilda visits clients in their homes, helping them to find housing, locate support services, or get other forms of assistance and health information.

An “unsung hero,” Nilda quietly helps families with passion and dedication. “I know she does a lot more than what she says she does,” says Ana Alfaro. “She never says what she’s doing; she just does it. She is able to make it look like she’s doing nothing. She is a very genuine, caring human being.”

Nilda was born in Puerto Rico and came to Hartford as a child with her family. She was always attracted to the medical field, and liked working with young people. When she was still in school part-time, Nilda was a medical case manager, providing medical care and social support to children born with HIV. She noticed the children’s siblings were often on the sidelines not receiving attention, so she wrote a small grant to hire support, and started a group for affected children.

This evolved into a family-centered program, although Nilda emphasizes that what she does is really a community approach to raising awareness about the treatment for and prevention of HIV. “There are constant challenges,” she says.

“Taking medications is a big barrier for [teens with HIV]. Some families don’t know their kid is living with HIV. Also at school, they might forget their clinic; we have to remind them. We work to suppress the virus as much as possible, and to prevent spread to other folks.”

“I see her motivating her clients to move ahead, not to be despondent, she’s very affectionate with all of her clients.” - Ana Alfaro

Nilda works to engage her clients in the work she does, teaching them to advocate for themselves, and

she searches for innovative ways to reach teens in their own setting. A mobile health van, for example, might appear at a city park on a Sunday with a make-shift triage area for confidential testing and counseling. Social risk behaviors and homelessness are major topics of discussion. A mobile theater and clinic might appear at a school-based health center, where students learn information through the arts and talk about the risk of tattoos or other concerns.

“They keep us motivated, they keep us engaged,” Nilda says. “It’s really wonderful to work with young folks, and particularly young folks with HIV. They’re just so courageous; they’re fearless.”

New opportunities to educate about HIV are on the horizon for Nilda. She’s starting an effort to provide group-level intervention for 13- to 29-year-olds with HIV, focusing on how to live healthier, how to get the health care they need, and how to adjust their risk behaviors so they don’t infect others or bring harm to themselves. Nilda is also working on teen pregnancy prevention with HIV-positive and affected young people in the Frog Hollow, Northeast, and Barry Square neighborhoods.

Nilda is well-respected by the people she serves. “I see her motivating her clients to move ahead, not to be despondent,” says Ana Alfaro. “She’s very affectionate with all of her clients.”

“HIV infection is increasing,” Ana adds. “Nilda is always an advocate for people to realize that this is a real issue; it’s happening, and it’s growing. She is knowledgeable, passionate, and is an educator.”

Gary and Karen O'Maxfield

Karen and Gary O'Maxfield, a freelance photographer/graphicartist, and a graphicartist at the XL Center, respectively, are both from the Hartford area. Together they led the creation of the Fairfield Avenue Neighborhood Association in 2008. With help from Memorial Baptist Church for meeting space and as a sponsor for a consultant, FANA was able to achieve a listing on the National Historic Register in July last year.



Photo: Brad Clift

“Too many people live their lives without thinking beyond their little world, staying insular,” says Jason Rojas. “Karen and Gary are involved in so many things. I see all the time and effort they put in.”

Both Karen and Gary moved away from Hartford for some years only to return to the city later in life. While doing website work, Karen found a shortage of good photos of the city. “I started trying to find the bits of Hartford that seemed lost to me,” she says, and her well-known, informative website about Hartford neighborhoods was born. Gary is a historian with a great interest in baseball history. They both enjoy investigating the history of Hartford. When they moved to Fairfield Avenue a dozen years ago, it seemed lost in a no-man’s-land set among three neighborhoods, bordering on other Neighborhood Revitalization Zones.

“Because the street was primarily residential,” Karen says, “there was not a lot going on. It’s a quiet area, and there was really no advocate for it, not since George Fairfield in the 19th century.” FANA emerged as an effort to bring the area together cohesively. Getting the historic designation took a lot of time, Karen says, “but I was just pretty dogged. In the process, I learned a whole lot

about the neighborhood and how the city works.” At the same time, she and Gary were launching a vintage baseball league in the city, based at Colt Park.

“Too many people live their lives without thinking beyond their little world, staying insular. Karen and Gary are involved in so many things. I see all the time and effort they put in.” - Jason Rojas.

In Frederick Law Olmsted’s Rain of Parks plan, Fairfield Avenue was meant to be a greenway connecting Cedar Hill Cemetery, Goodwin Park, and Rocky Ridge Park, as part of

a chain. Many trees were lost to Dutch Elm disease, “but we’d like to see it become a greenway again,” Karen says, “and not just a fast escape route to the Berlin Turnpike. We’d like to see it become a pleasant drive with vistas on either side, and for people to slow down as you drive through. We hope the street will no longer be just a straight, open thoroughfare.”

FANA is working with the city now on traffic calming measures in accordance with goals in the Plan of Conservation and Development. The Metropolitan District Commission has plans to renovate the street and it is an opportunity for some redesign, including curb bump-outs.

Karen is redesigning her neighborhoods website, with new photos, at hartford.omaxfield.com, thanks to a city arts grant. She says she does the volunteer work “for the love of it.”





Rosa Plaza

Rosa Plaza is Director of Human Resources at Our Piece of the Pie. Among her tasks is to participate in youth training for career competencies, or job readiness skills. She reviews resumes, and educates about employer expectations, youth employment law, OSHA compliance for youth, and youths' rights on the job. "I feel strongly about working in an agency that supports young people in their development,"

Rosa says. She focuses on the skeletal support structure, as she puts it, supporting "the entire organism."

Bob Rath, OPP Executive Director, says, "We had an all staff meeting once where people could express appreciation for anyone. Four or five people gave personal testimony of how Rosa was aware of their personal or family difficulties, delivered food, clothes, and did whatever was needed. She's extraordinary: she has a warm heart and is a great listener. She's the glue that holds the community together."

Rosa moved from Puerto Rico to Hartford in 1971 with her family, and endured a culture shock moving to an area with extreme racial and class tensions. She lived in the Charter Oak Terrace housing project, which today is the address of WalMart. "It's a population that thinks, 'I'm in despair.' Can anything become of people from that environment? Yes, we can all make it out. We just have to make the right choices, and be fortunate enough to encounter the right people."

Strong values were instilled in Rosa by her faith community, as well as her mother and grandmother. She credits Raul Gonzales, who ran a drug rehabilitation facility, as a mentor who gave her helpful counsel. "He would listen, and have something wise to say," she says. "He just helped me tremendously—to deal with fear, reality, anger."

When she is orienting new OPP staff members, Rosa says she reminds them that life brings unexpected change. "At any moment you could be a victim of a circumstance," she says, "and being unprepared means you could have a wrong

reaction, but that doesn't determine who you are. Be open. Sometimes people need to be heard."

"Rosa is altruism personified," Bob Rath says. "All that motivation is internal. She's an invisible hand, just doing good work. She's very humble. Rosa is one of those silent heroes."

While in high school at Bulkeley, Rosa worked briefly for a law firm, and then as a judicial court interpreter. She also toiled for years to help translate religious documents into Spanish for her church. "It was laborious work," says Alta Lash. "It took her a long time, and a lot of effort."

"Rosa is altruism personified, all that motivation is internal. She's an invisible hand, just doing good work. She's very humble. Rosa is one of those silent heroes." - Bob Rath

When Rosa got to college, she thought she might become a bilingual secretary. She worked for the Connecticut Society of CPAs, and then went to

Guatemala for two and a half years. The trip to Central America involved mission work at a Christian drug rehabilitation center in an area utterly without resources. Rosa saw poverty, homelessness and hunger in a whole new light. "There is no soup kitchen, nowhere you can try and satisfy that need," she says. "I think only overseas experience can change you, to help you appreciate whatever you have. I learned to appreciate shelter, family, potable water."

Rosa worked for a drug rehabilitation program after returning, pursued biblical studies, and later worked for the Asylum Hill Organizing Project doing community organizing. That work had been winding down when she began work for OPP.

"Rosa is a person who very quietly, behind the scenes, makes people the best that they can be," Alta Lash says. "Whether it's helping them with family situations, at work, suggesting things—she has helped several of our organizers when they were going through transitions. She holds things together. Without people like Rosa, we would be nowhere. Caring for people and social justice are who she is. She's one of a kind."

Hartford Hospital Institutional Award

Each year SINA gives out an Institutional Award that recognizes and honors an employee from one of our three institutions. This individual goes beyond the call of duty and contributes significantly to the betterment of the Hartford neighborhoods.



Ana Maria Reyes-Scott

Ana Maria Reyes-Scott is a social worker at Hartford Hospital. Born and raised in Hartford, Ana Maria has lived in both the North and South Ends. She dedicates herself to work and volunteers time to the Hartford community. “I always have the sense of belonging to my community,” Ana Maria says. “I love Hartford.”

“I came from the time when all you heard was somebody getting killed because of the gangs,” Ana Maria adds. “I never left. This place is what made me complete. What better than to be here where I belong? My mother raised me to believe you always give back; you always do for others, as you would like them to do for you.” Ana Maria contributes in countless ways to needs across the city, and involves her own children and her work colleagues in the service as much as she can.

For a number of years, Ana Maria has served as captain of Hartford Hospital’s team for the annual Great American Clean Up on Park Street, sponsored by the Spanish American Merchants Association. She regularly recruits fellow coworkers to serve on the team with her. Last year, around 20 Hartford Hospital volunteers participated, and the team was featured on Telemundo’s *Hola Ciudad* website. This year, she is doing it again. “Ana Maria volunteers her time by giving back to her community, a community she wholeheartedly loves, believes, and lives in,” says a colleague at Hartford Hospital. “She believes that helping and giving back are essential to her village. One cannot be complete without the other.”

“Ana Maria is well-liked and well-respected by her colleagues,” says Monica Fowler, a work supervisor. When Ana Maria arrived at Hartford Hospital, she had a Bachelor’s in social work. She worked full time while the hospital accommodated her effort to complete a Master’s degree in social work. When she did, Hartford Hospital upgraded her position.

Each year, Ana Maria helps children living at emergency homeless shelters with a backpack drive. This year she helped to get several dozen backpacks to children by involving her social work department among others at Hartford Hospital. Backpacks are outfitted with essential items so the children are ready for school. “So many families are affected by fires, or domestic violence,” Ana Maria explains. “I want those kids to be able to go to school. We include gift cards for uniforms if we can. Moms are barely making it on their week’s pay or their SSI, and this is one less thing for them to worry about.”

“I love Hartford...I need my community, and my community needs me. I live by that golden rule, you know?” - Ana Maria Reyes-Scott

In addition, Ana Maria prepares and serves a home-cooked Spanish dinner twice a year for hundreds of homeless shelter residents, often including roast pork. She involves her colleagues from

Hartford Hospital’s social work department in coordinating the dinners. Ana Maria says this is merely what she’d hope someone would do for her if the tables were turned. “That could be me in that shelter,” she says. “What would I want? How would I want someone to help me?”

In a similar fashion, Ana Maria runs a Thanksgiving turkey dinner basket drive every year for outpatients who otherwise would not have a holiday meal, as well as a Christmas-time holiday basket. She prepares all the fixings for recipients, and engages the support of many colleagues at Hartford Hospital. In this way, she sets an example for other employees and helps to find creative and meaningful ways for them to contribute to families in need.

Ana Maria has found a way to provide services in addition to her day job because she knows how important it is to overall health in the community, and that giving back to her community is what helps it prosper and grow. “I need my community, and my community needs me. I live by that golden rule, you know?”

Recognizing over 110 neighborhood service recipients

Since 1991

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|------|--|------|---|------|---|
| 2011 | Carlos Espinosa David O. McKinely Lee Boulanger Charlene Perez Lt. Brian Foley | 2003 | Marc Negron Helen & Walter Krepcio Judy & Tom Lyona Maulyn Rossetti | 1996 | Yolanda Rivera Maxine Steward Tara Lawson Gill |
| 2010 | Paul Kapustinski Hartford Peacebuilders Sylvia Garcia Evelyn Figueroa | 2002 | David Botero Laure Web Yolanda Rivera Edgar Reyes Hector Robles Nilda Santana | 1995 | David Martinez Rina Reyes Janis Mitchell Susan Santilli Ann MacGillis |
| 2009 | Benjamin Cruse Leticia Colon Cornell Lewis Noel Casiano Alison Giuliano | 2001 | Descatour Potier Caleb Cutler Robert O'Conner Bruce Johnston Joyce Boysco Gerry Murasso Lew Espyo | 1994 | Rosa Morales Marc Rubera Julio Concepcion Diane Zannoni Nancy Galarza Ron Cretaro Bernadine Silvers |
| 2008 | Elly Jacobson Gloria Dieppa Sally Vazquez Doug Campbell | 2000 | Sister Maris Stella Hickey Michael Lawton Maria Capeles Yvelte Gonzalez Joe Barber Hector Hernandez | 1993 | Carol Blanks-Lawson Barry D'Onofrio Emmie Galarza Dulcie Galarza Silas Shannon Mollie Shelton BR. Marcus Turcotte |
| 2007 | Luis Valentin John Nelson Walter Kienia Father Charles Jacobs Robert Sampl | 1998 | April Goff Brown Edith Lacey Garry Lapidus John Tornature Hycacinth Yennie | 1992 | Ann Baker Rev. Lyle J. Beckman Bethy Berrios Kenneth Eltherich Jr. Lydia Rolan Patrick H. Tallman Gloria Williams |
| 2005 | Maxine Sullivan Shannon Raider Reynaldo Morales Carlos Gonzalez Eddie Lacey | 1997 | Kim McClain Liberty Ortiz Francesca Reale Jame R. Reed Jr. Robin Standifer Margaret Stewart | 1991 | Fr. James Aherene John Bonelli Gladys Capo Barbara Jean Easley Imelda Morneauuly Boy Scout Troop 105 |
| 2004 | Richard deMey Earl Costenoble Ethel Austin Chris Lyons Charlie Morris | 1996 | Jackie Fongemie Bruce Johnston Aida Morales | | |
| 2003 | Alan Carbonneau Barbara Hennigues Aura Alvarado David Corrigan | | | | |



*The SINA / Ivan A. Backer Scholarship started in 1997
and to date over 50 students have been paid
for a total of over \$142,375.*

The program was established in honor of Ivan Backer, who served as president of SINA for nearly 20 years and who was one of the driving forces behind the revival of Hartford's Southside neighborhood. The recipients are selected based on service to community, school and family, as well as for academic achievement. The scholarship consists of three awards of \$4,000 (\$1,000 per year for 4 years) to Bulkeley High School seniors continuing their education at an accredited 4-year postsecondary program.



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|------|--|------|---|
| 2011 | Izet Krdzic Koralys Maldonado Annabell Moquette | 2003 | Nathalie Acevedo Karolina Ballester Jasmin Gonzalez |
| 2010 | Sefedin Begic Saida Cooke Ceilena Gurahoo | 2002 | Irena Kaci Chariunis Perez Daisy Susaya |
| 2009 | Racquel Bowen Jose Colon Dorota Panek | 2001 | Robin Duetsch Khiem Dinh Evelyn Medina |
| 2008 | Evebonee Acosta Brian Carvalho Jonia Shtembari | 2000 | Jacyln Lackner Soide Rodriguez Nicholas Trigila |
| 2007 | Danielle Cargill Rashadda Gregory Deaci-ann Wallen | 1999 | Shawn Bachan Andrew Moran Lisa Tromba |
| 2006 | Zulynette Morales Shaneca Napier Bryon Rodriguez | 1998 | Thu Suong Nguyen Tara-Ivette Osorio Illiana Rivera Daniel Ruede Gladys Dantiago |
| 2005 | Ruben Castillo Ashley Nieves Anna Tuminska | 1997 | Eddie Lawerence Van Nguyen James Reed Rexana Rodriguez Julio Roman |
| 2004 | Laura Camacho John Szpyt Thu Thi Nguyen Xuan | | |

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REACH is sponsored by
SINA and its member institutions.

Our mission is to develop, support and recognize individuals who
positively contribute to the growth of the Hartford Community.



SOUTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS
NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE

207 Washington Street, Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: (860) 493-1618 * Fax: (860) 520-1359

www.sinainc.org