



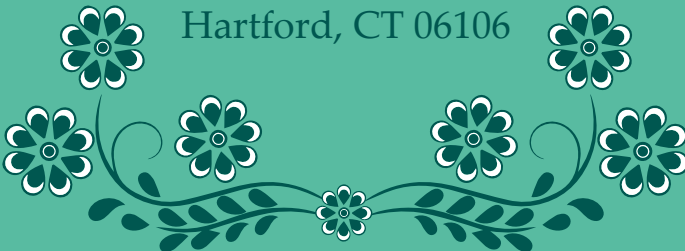
Recognition • Education • Achievement • Community Health

SINA's 18th Annual REACH Awards Ceremony

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

**Hartford Hospital
Huebelin Hall in the ERC
560 Hudson Street,
Hartford, CT 06106**





PROGRAM



Masters of Ceremonies

Laura Marin Ruiz,
Program Business Consultant,
Connecticut Children's

Linda Torres
Office Administrator and Project Manager
SINA Inc.

Welcome

Bimal Patel
President,
Hartford Hospital

Jane Baird,
Senior Director of External Relations,
Connecticut Children's
& SINA Board Chair

Melvyn Colón,
Executive Director,
SINA Inc.

** Dinner **

Awards Presentation

Ivan A. Backer Scholarship
Presented by: Nancy Mendez, Carmen Diaz, and Zuleica Castro

Kelly Styles STEM Scholarship
Presented by: Matt Reilly and Laura Marin Ruiz

SINA Student Support Scholarship
Presented by: Ana Marie Basche and Juan Caez

Neighborhood Service Award
Presented by: Juan Dominguez, Victor Cristofaro, and Jacquelyn Santiago Nazario

Stephen Balcanoff Award
Presented by: Mary Diaz-Raymond



Kelly Styles S.T.E.M. Scholarship



Kelly Styles is the former Senior VP, Chief Information Officer at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. His passion is to support young people going into careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (S.T.E.M.). Kelly retired from Connecticut Children's in June 2020, and as a tribute to him, generous individuals in Connecticut Children's Information Solutions department donated the funds to create the Kelly Styles S.T.E.M. Scholarship. The 2024 Kelly Styles S.T.E.M. Scholarships recipient is:



Jomelis Bruno

Jomelis is a student at Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy. She is planning on attending UConn to pursue a degree in Mathematics. "Mathematics has the power to provide certainty in a world that sometimes lacks it. ... Even though I do not know what specific career I will be making a living off of in the future, my hope in pursuing a mathematics degree in college is not just to further develop my problem-solving skills but to use them in a way to help and be a positive influence in the lives of those I encounter."



Ivan A. Backer Scholarship

The SINA / Ivan A. Backer Scholarship program was established in 1997 in honor of Ivan Backer, who served as founder and executive director of SINA for nearly 20 years. The recipients are selected based on service to community, school, family, and academic achievement. SINA is delighted to celebrate the following students as recipients of our 2024 Ivan A. Backer Scholarships.



Sofia A. Cabello

Sofia is a student at Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy. She plans to attend CCSU to major in Civil Engineering. “Through my involvement in my community, I’ve learned that though people are different from one another, there is always something that connects us all. Being able to find what it is that makes us similar is a beautiful thing.”



Kebra-Nagast M. Takahashi

Kebra-Nagast is a student at Bulkeley High School. He is planning on attending CCSU to pursue a degree in Social Work. Keybra-Nagast has been an activist in pushing awareness of the recent school budget cuts. “I don’t do it for me, I do it for the students that come after me that will have to face the problematic aftermath of these budget cuts.” Keybra-Nagast believes that being involved in your community can make a big difference.



Ava M. Hamilton

Ava is a student at Sport and Medical Sciences Academy. She plans to attend UHART to achieve a degree in Nursing. Ava spent 50 hours volunteering at a hospital “I saw just how important everyone in a hospital is. I watched the cleaning staff, got to see surgeons performing surgery, and was fascinated with the whole experience. ... Volunteering also allowed me to realize what I wanted to do as a career choice after being indecisive.”





SINA Student Support Scholarship

The purpose of the SINA Student Support Scholarship, established in 2012, is to provide much-needed financial support to students who are attending CT State Capital Community College (CCC). SINA is delighted to celebrate the following recipients of our 2024 SINA Student Support Scholarship.



Anisha Nasrudeen

Anisha Nasrudeen studies Radiology at CT State Capital Community College. Her goal is to become a Radiology Technician stating, “I chose the major radiology to have the opportunity to work in the healthcare field and directly impact patient care.” Anisha is grateful to receive the 2024 SINA Student Support Scholarship. “This scholarship will provide me with financial support that eases the burden of tuition fees and other educational expenses, allowing me to focus more on my studies and professional development. This financial assistance can also give me the freedom to explore additional learning opportunities, attend conferences, or invest in resources that enhance my skills in radiology.”

Judith Appah



Judith Appah can be described as compassionate, hardworking, reliable, and a strong, dedicated, and uplifting mother. Shanika McKay, LPC, Senior Integrated Healthcare Clinician at Wheeler Clinic states “Judith always ensures she puts her best foot forward as evidenced by her faith-driven values.

She views work as an opportunity to not only challenge herself and grow as an individual but, also to serve others through her diligence and caring nature.”

Judith studies Nursing at CT State Capital Community College. Judith is proud to be a role model for her children, nieces, and nephews. Showing the younger generation what dedication and hard work can do. “I want to show my siblings that the right time can be anytime. I want them to be proud of me because they’ve always said I was going to be successful in whatever I did in life. I am honestly so grateful about how far I’ve come. ... I am reminded that there are people who are invested in my academic success and that they invested in the funding of this scholarship to ensure that I succeed. I am very appreciative to have this opportunity to apply for the scholarship. I know my future is going to be bright, and I am excited to see the fulfillment of it all.”





Neighborhood Service Awards

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



Diane Callis

Diane Callis is the Athletic Director at Bulkeley High School and was nominated for the 2024 Neighborhood Service Award by coach Juan Dominguez. He describes her as “a huge advocate for the South End, for Bulkeley and for our kids.” Juan emphasizes the variety of events Diane has at the school, from tournaments and championships to proms and sports camps. He says “she wants to show people we can do it, and she partners with businesses to get the needed resources. She’s there for all the kids, the parents and the community.”

“I found a place I really liked, with great colleagues and administration,” says Diane, explaining her 41 years at Bulkeley. Having started as a part time teacher and pool coach, she eventually became a fulltime teacher and then athletic director, holding down both jobs while “multitasking all the time.” She explains it was possible to do this thanks to “a good support system and liking what you do.” She adds “I like to always credit the kids and my amazing coaches.”

According to Juan, “Diane retired from teaching three years ago, but she still fields so many calls citywide and helps teachers get certified. She doesn’t need to do it, but when coworkers call for advice, they know Diane will help.” He cites her work on the Bulkeley Hall of Fame as an example of how she “has so much pride and dignity.” Diane enjoys this extra involvement, believing that “the more you are involved with the kids, the more you get out of it.”

Thinking about her longevity at Bulkeley, Diane insists “If I had to do it all over again, I wouldn’t do it any differently. It’s not the trend today, but you get so much more out of history, tradition and continuity. It helps provide a safe haven for the kids, who get attached. The grass isn’t always greener, and I would rather weather the storm with people I know. I bleed maroon and white, not red.”





Maria Caraballo

Maria Caraballo works in the Family Resource Center at Burns Latino Studies Academy and was nominated for the 2024 Neighborhood Service Award by the school’s principal, Victor Cristofaro. He cited her “behind the scenes, low-key” approach, saying she “does the legwork” to keep things running smoothly. Victor says “Maria is one of those people that the more you get to know her, the more you realize how much she does and how many of our programs rely on her. Her relationship with our families is amazing. As an example, she took in a homeless woman with three children, because they didn’t want to leave our school.”

That family stayed seven months. Maria now refers to them as “my other daughter and my grandkids.” She explains “my mom was my inspiration. I always saw her helping other people. I remember her telling me not to go into my room after school one day and I couldn’t understand why. It turned out she had brought home an elderly woman from the hospital who had nowhere to go. The woman was sleeping in my room, and stayed with us for several months. My mother was my role model.”

Victor describes “Maria trucking along with a cart full of bags to hand out on Fridays,” when she goes from classroom to classroom delivering backpacks of weekend food for families in need. She helps with a variety of programs, from Common Sense Parenting and Family Read, to the food pantry and graduation decorations. “She is very creative and artistic,” adds Victor. “Whenever I need a poster for an event, Maria is my person.”

Maria is “surprised and humbled to receive this award. I’m doing the work because I like it.” Victor states “we are a community school, a hub for our families. There’s nothing I value more than my community and anyone, like Maria, who supports that effort.” Maria says “it fills my heart when the children say thank you for the backpacks. I believe every human being must help others.”





Larry Johnson

Larry “Love” Johnson, Director of Crisis and Hospital Response at COMPASS Youth Collaborative, was nominated for the 2024 Neighborhood Service Award by his colleague Ayelet Chozick. She was thrilled he won, but added “I had known him for years. It was one of the biggest disappointments of my life to learn that Love wasn’t his real last name, when I had his business cards printed.” Apparently Love suits Larry, whom she describes as “a person who sees the potential in the youth we serve, and will do anything to help them reach it.”

Larry says “I’ve always had a space in my heart to help others.” Growing up around drugs, violence and trauma, he experienced it firsthand when he became a crime victim. During his long healing process, he thought about ways to help. He insists “this work found me. Others said ‘Hartford needs you. You have the spirit for it.’ I was interning at COMPASS and decided to sell my liquor store, to dedicate my whole life to bettering the city.”

Ayelet explains “Larry has a unique job, being on duty 24/7. Authorized to enter emergency rooms, he helps calm patients and keep families informed. I remember him buying supplies to repair a door so a victim of violence could feel safe. He makes sure patients have clothes that aren’t bloody or torn, so they’re not traumatized all over again.” Larry describes his role as navigating “between hospital staff, family and friends to help everyone feel safe, to be the person the patient can talk to and start to heal.”

Larry cites an instance that keeps him motivated, a chaotic scene after a shooting when he was shocked to find a toddler in the emergency room. He recalls “I had to face my own trauma and fell apart, just froze. Luckily, the surgeon knew me and took me aside, saying ‘this family needs you’ and helping me get it together.” As Ayelet emphasizes, “Larry wants to get the world to what it could be.”





Stephen Balcanoff Award

Each year SINA gives out an institutional award, known as the Stephen Balcanoff Award. The award honors long-time SINA board member Steve Balcanoff, who retired in 2020 after more than 40 years at Connecticut Children's. This award recognizes someone whose dedication to community service echoes Steve's, and who is an employee of one of SINA's three anchor institutions.



Dorely Roldan

Dorely Roldan, Manager for Community Health and Health Promotion at Hartford Hospital, is the 2024 winner of SINA's Stephen Balcanoff Award. According to Mary Diaz Raymond, who supervises her, "what stands out about Dorely is that she is so

aware of what the community needs. She grew up in Hartford, went to school here, knows where the resources are – she has lived it.” Dorely agrees, saying “I grew up in 06120 and went to Weaver. I’m the daughter of a single mom who came here from Puerto Rico with eight children. Now my twin sons are in college, and I will receive a degree in June. I am the exception to the rule, and I want to ensure that kids, who are like I was, have opportunities.”

Making people aware of and helping them access resources is important to Dorely. She attributes this to her mother’s influence. She explains “Mom was very giving, known for helping people, and I get a big heart from her. She always told us to ‘touch people in a good way’ and that is what I’ve tried to do.” Dorely considered becoming a police officer, but once she started at the hospital cleaning rooms she “saw the disparities, and what our institution can do to help.” She stayed and worked in cancer prevention for 20 years; her mother died of breast cancer when Dorely was 23 years old. Dorely shifted to community health two years ago, thinking “now I can help even more people.”

That has certainly proven to be the case. Mary cites Dorely’s dedication to building partnerships with area health centers, for patient referrals, and with Boys and Girls Clubs, so kids can meet with professionals to learn about healthcare careers. On one memorable occasion, she says,



“Dorely brought an inflatable colon in her car to the Hartford Jazz Festival, to help explain the importance of colonoscopies.” She has also brought along staff from the neuroscience and heart institutes, to provide cardio screenings and to answer questions about Parkinson’s Disease.

Mary states “Dorely is so devoted and empathetic. She is able to do a great job of connecting with the community and gaining trust, because she’s been there.” Dorely truly believes in “doing the work and getting my hands dirty” to help Hartford residents access healthcare, and thus embodies the true spirit of the Stephen Balcanoff Award.



**Know of anyone deserving of the
2025 Neighborhood Service Awards?**

Visit www.sinainc.org/nsa2025
to submit your 2025 nomination.

**Interested in joining the
REACH Committee?**

Contact Linda Torres at
lvalentin@sinainc.org
or call (860) 493-1618.

Visit www.sinainc.org/reach for more information.

**Donate to the
Kelly Styles S.T.E.M Scholarship
through GoFundMe
www.gofund.me/471584b9**

For more information visit
www.sinainc.org/stem_scholarship.



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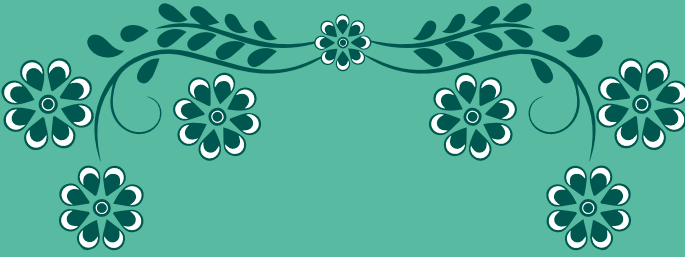
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REACH is sponsored by SINA, Inc.
and its member institutions:
Connecticut Children's Medical Center,
Trinity College,
and Hartford Hospital

The REACH Committee's mission is to develop, support
and recognize individuals who positively contribute to
the growth of the Hartford Community.



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