



The Schwartz Center Names Recipient of 2016 National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year Award

Randi Kaplan, LMSW, Montefiore Health System, recognized for her extraordinary support and compassion for caregivers during their most challenging times

BOSTON (Nov. 16, 2016)—[The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare](#), a national leader in the movement to make compassion a vital element in every patient-caregiver interaction, has named Randi Kaplan, LMSW, the National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year (NCCY) Award recipient. The prestigious NCCY Award was presented at the 21st Annual Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Healthcare Dinner on Nov. 15, where Randi was honored in front of 2,000 healthcare leaders, clinicians, patients and family members.

Randi Kaplan is the co-founder and director of the [Arthur D. Emil Caregiver Support Center](#) at Montefiore Health System in Bronx, N.Y., an oasis where family caregivers can find a safe refuge in the hospital, and the comfort and support they need for their personal caregiving challenges. The first and only center of its kind in metropolitan New York City, the Caregiver Support Center provides a place where caregivers can find a quiet place to rest, sip a hot drink or engage in meaningful conversation with Randi, her program assistant and highly trained volunteers. It is also a place where challenging discussions about illness can be held in private and quiet surroundings, and where hospital professionals from all disciplines – surgeons, audiologists, ICU nurses – can come for the empathy and warm reassurance they may need. These kinds of services are becoming increasingly important amidst a rise in burnout rates among the healthcare workforce, now at historically high levels.

“Randi’s devotion to the Caregiver Support Center is really a commitment to each individual broken heart that walks through those doors,” said Laura Tocci, a family caregiver who has benefited from the services provided at Montefiore’s Caregiver Support Center. “She looks with her strength into each person’s pain, and gives them the courage they need to do whatever is necessary for their loved one. She honors the caregiver’s relationship with their loved one and family. This enables us to travel this sometimes terrifying journey together – as a family.”

The NCCY Award is a national recognition program that celebrates excellence in compassionate healthcare. Through this program, the Schwartz Center honors caregivers like Randi Kaplan who embody the characteristics of compassion, which include effective communication, emotional support, mutual trust and respect, the involvement of families in healthcare decisions and treating patients as people, not just illnesses.

During her remarks at the dinner, Randi Kaplan shared the way she and her staff work with caregivers at their center to ensure they are not only supported but also given the strength to carry on. “We offer compassion that validates the pain, but also provide the comfort to ease it,” said Randi Kaplan. “We absorb just enough of the pain to break the fall, but then we stabilize the

person enough so that they can keep on going.” Randi also went on to express what she feels is the most important part of her job working with caregivers. “Listening is the most powerful tool,” she said. “Sometimes I just listen to the tears, because there are no words.”

“The Schwartz Center is pleased to recognize Randi and our National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year Award finalists for their remarkable dedication to patients and caregivers,” said Julie Rosen, executive director of the Schwartz Center. “It is truly a privilege to witness and celebrate the positive impact of compassionate care, on both the person providing and the person receiving that care. The individuals and team we acknowledged for this year’s NCCY Award will continue to inspire all of us as we strive to make compassion a vital element throughout the entire healthcare system.”

The five 2016 NCCY Award finalists are:

- **Shieva Khayam-Bashi, MD, of Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital** in San Francisco, Calif., doctor and medical director of the hospital’s long-term care facility and preceptor of the Foundations of Patient Care course.
- **David Pascoe, MA, BCC, of Primary Children’s Hospital in Salt Lake City, Utah**, an interfaith chaplain with specialty training in pediatrics and palliative care/hospice.
- **Allissa Randazzo, BSN, RN**, of Aspen House Memory Care Assisted Living in Loveland, Colo., a nurse who cares for residents with severe cognitive impairment at an assisted living home.
- **Vincent Waite, MD, MPH, of Greater Lawrence Family Health Center in Lawrence, Mass.**, a doctor and mentor recognized for his decades-long commitment to the poor, homeless and medically underserved in both Lawrence and Ghana, where he has taught medical students and physician residents.
- **The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center – Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute (OSUCCC–James) Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU)** in Columbus, Ohio, a dedicated team of individuals caring for cancer patients and their families.

The award recipient receives a \$5,000 monetary prize, and the five finalists receive \$1,000 each.

The NCCY Award is made possible through the generous support of Optum and Modern Healthcare, sponsors of the award.

About the NCCY Award

The Schwartz Center’s National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year (NCCY) Award is a national recognition program that elevates excellence in compassionate healthcare. Since 1999, the Schwartz Center has honored caregivers who embody the characteristics of compassionate care, which include effective communication, emotional support, mutual trust and respect, the involvement of families in healthcare decisions, and treating patients as people, not just illnesses. Award finalists are chosen by a national review committee, which includes past award

recipients, in collaboration with representatives from the American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association and American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. Visit theschwartzcenter.org/award for award details.

About the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare

Established in 1995, the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, a leader in the movement to make compassion a vital element in every patient-caregiver interaction, was founded on the belief that greater compassion and more meaningful collaboration are fundamental to the kind of care clinicians want to deliver and patients want to receive.

The Schwartz Center is an independent, non-profit organization, with more than 425 healthcare members in the U.S. and Canada, supporting 200,000 healthcare professionals each year. In partnership with the Point of Care Foundation, more than 150 hospitals, hospices and other healthcare organizations conduct the innovative Schwartz Rounds™ program in the U.K., which unites caregivers from a range of disciplines to share experiences, learn from each other and focus on the human dimension of medicine. Schwartz Center members rely on programs, education and resources to support clinician well-being, enhance the quality of care, enable better outcomes and create a more positive and rewarding experience for all members of the care team, patients and their families. The Center's inaugural Annual Compassion in Action Healthcare Conference (compassioninactionconference.org) will bring together clinicians, patients and families, health system leadership and others to advance a common goal of delivering more compassionate, collaborative care. Registration for the conference is now open.

To help patients and family members acknowledge caregivers who epitomize the qualities of compassionate care the Schwartz Center established the Honor Your Caregiver program. Through its National Compassionate Caregiver of the Year Award, the Center celebrates healthcare professionals who display extraordinary devotion and compassion in caring for patients and families.

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