



The Schwartz Center Names Recipients of the 2025 National Compassionate Caregivers of the Year® Award

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Three healthcare professionals to be honored at the
30th Annual Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Healthcare Dinner

BOSTON (November 11, 2025)—[The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare](#) has selected three recipients for the 2025 [National Compassionate Caregivers of the Year® \(NCCY\) Award](#), recognizing their extraordinary compassion in the care of their patients, colleagues, and communities.

The recipients will be honored on November 18 at the [30th Annual Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Healthcare Dinner](#) in Boston, MA. The event brings together healthcare leaders, clinicians, and supporters to raise funding for programs that help healthcare workers provide compassionate care to patients and families. This year's keynote speaker is **Stephen Trzeciak, MD, MPH**, co-author of "Compassionomics: The Revolutionary Scientific Evidence that Caring Makes a Difference" and recipient of the inaugural Schwartz Compassion Champion Award.

"These remarkable individuals demonstrate that compassion is not simply an ideal—it is a transformative force that heals, sustains, and uplifts everyone it touches," said **Michael Gustafson, MD, MBA**, CEO of the Schwartz Center. "Their dedication to fostering cultures of empathy and excellence reminds us why compassionate care must remain at the heart of our healthcare system."

"These exceptional individuals embody the healing power of human connection in healthcare," said **Jean-Paul Rebillard**, chair of the Schwartz Center Board and president of MedPro Specialty at MedPro Group. "Their unwavering dedication to treating patients and families with dignity, empathy, and respect reminds us that compassionate care is a profound commitment to honoring the humanity in every person they serve. They inspire us all."

The 2025 NCCY Award recipients are:

- [Elise Bartoul, MA, LPC, LPAT, ATR-BC](#), UH Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital, Cleveland, OH

As a licensed art therapist and counselor, Elise supports patients, families, and healthcare staff through some of the most challenging moments in pediatric medicine. She has developed innovative therapeutic approaches for children facing terminal diagnoses and their families, creating spaces for healing and expression when traditional medical interventions are no longer possible. Her work extends to supporting bereaved families and helping healthcare teams process the emotional toll of pediatric end-of-life care. "When there were no more treatment options and there was nothing else we could do, Elise showed us how much more we could do, together," said a patient's family member. "She helped heal our family."

- **Mark Brown, Boston Children's Hospital (retired), Boston, MA**
 Mark recently retired after 36 years as an extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) specialist, caring for critically ill children and their families. He combined technical mastery with a deeply humanistic approach, mentoring countless colleagues in both the clinical and emotional aspects of critical care. His influence shaped how an entire generation of specialists approach their work, emphasizing that technical excellence and compassionate presence are inseparable. "Mark not only taught me how to do my job, but how to take care of a child on both a level of skill and an emotional level," said a colleague. For the rest of my career, I will model my practice, both at the bedside and in leadership, on one individual. Mark Brown is that person."
- **Gioconda Mojica, MD, UTHealth Houston McGovern School of Medicine, Houston, TX**
 Dr. Mojica serves as both a corneal transplant surgeon and assistant professor of ophthalmology, where her patient care is deeply rooted in presence and human connection. She is known for taking time to understand each patient's unique fears and hopes, making the surgical experience as emotionally supportive as it is clinically excellent. Her approach has transformed how patients experience vision restoration, viewing it not just as a medical procedure but as a restoration of dignity and quality of life. One patient described her as "the person who gave me back my life, my light, and my dignity."

About the National Compassionate Caregivers of the Year® Award

Since 1999, the Schwartz Center has honored healthcare professionals who display extraordinary compassion in caring for patients and families. The award recognizes professionals whose achievements have helped create healing healthcare environments for patients, families, colleagues, and communities. Award finalists are chosen by a national review committee.

The Schwartz Center is grateful to **CRICO** for its generous support of the National Compassionate Caregivers of the Year Award. For close to 50 years, CRICO has provided industry-leading medical professional liability coverage, claims management, and patient safety resources to all of the Harvard medical institutions and their affiliates, and is a recognized leader in evidence-based risk management. Through a national data collaborative, Candello, a division of CRICO, provides clinical risk intelligence products and solutions and fosters an active online community of shared learning.

"At CRICO, we recognize that the safest, most effective health care emerges when clinical excellence is delivered with genuine compassion," said **Mark E. Reynolds**, CEO of CRICO. "We know that when caregivers create environments of trust and understanding, patients heal more completely. That's why this award matters so deeply to us—it celebrates the kind of care that doesn't just treat illness, but treats the whole person."

Visit theschwartzcenter.org/award for details.

About the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare

Founded in 1995, the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare partners with healthcare organizations to advance compassion for patients, care teams, and their healing relationships.

Nearly 800 healthcare organizations around the world run the Schwartz Rounds® program, which creates dedicated space for healthcare workers to discuss the emotional dimensions of their work—both the challenges and the joys. Research shows this program strengthens compassion and enhances patient care.

The Schwartz Center’s evidence-informed programs and resources have proven to be versatile, sustainable and effective across diverse settings, including hospitals, outpatient clinics, cancer centers, VA medical centers, organ donation organizations, nursing homes, hospice providers, health insurers, and beyond.

Visit us at theschwartzcenter.org or follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

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