Welcome to the Community Awards Luncheon
30 CARD
Center for Autism & Related Disabilities
University of Miami
Nova Southeastern University

Saturday
APRIL 27, 2024
InterContinental Miami Hotel

30 YEARS OF UNRIValed EXCELLENCE
Honorees

BLAKE and JENNIFER SANDO

Tropical Nights
CARD
Center for Autism & Related Disabilities
University of Miami
Nova Southeastern University

Tropical Nights
Chairpersons

JUAN & NATALIE FERNANDEZ and
CHENDO CHAVARRIA & LORENA VALENTINI
CARD Constituency Board Chair
Pastor Fuster
Farides Garcia is President of Parent to Parent of Miami, an organization with whom CARD has had one of its longest partnerships. Her goal is to help families find their voice and help bring the family perspective to those in the community, and there is no doubt she has done that for many families in our community. This year we are honored to present our Unsung Hero Award to Farides for her significant contributions and the impact she has had on our community. Congratulations Farides!
Vivian Levy is the type of leader we very much appreciate at CARD. She is not one to seek the spotlight. Instead, she leads with quiet determination and kindness. She is being recognized today for her outstanding leadership as part of the Miami Lakes Special Needs Advisory Board and for being a positive voice for meaningful change in Miami Lakes and beyond, and a great and supportive CARD partner.
We are so pleased to congratulate Maria Mora on receiving the Unsung Hero Award this year! Maria has been an invaluable part of our CARD family for 12 years where she directly oversees the fiscal management of our grants. Her attention to detail and ability to manage the complexities of our many grants and contracts is outstanding. We simply could not operate as an organization without her expertise! Maria always goes above and beyond and does so with a smile! We are so happy to be able to celebrate you for all of your hard work and dedication. We love you!
Rhonda Bachmann has served the autism community for over 25 years in different capacities within the Broward County Public School System, from her current role at FDLRS to autism coach and program specialist. She has been a great source of knowledge and support for school staff, families and individuals with autism. Rhonda has also been a great friend to CARD and collaborated on several different projects with CARD staff through the years.
Ava Goldman is being recognized for decades of steadfast and inspired leadership in the public school system in Miami-Dade County. Ms. Goldman is a trusted partner of ours at CARD and we simply could not support our clients and families in Miami-Dade County Public Schools as well as we do without her compassionate leadership and endless support. Ava has also been an innovator in helping to craft how the school district and CARD approach our creative partnerships. This truly sets her apart from her peers.
We are proud to honor Gabriel Escobar as one of our Outstanding Volunteers. In addition to volunteering at various local organizations, Gabriel teaches others about autism with grace and leadership. He has a positive attitude, a willingness to help, and a strong work ethic like no other!
While a senior at Mast Academy High School, Flora Grinfeder volunteered at UM's early intervention IBIS clinic. She developed and prepared therapeutic and educational craft activities for the children at IBIS. Flora's work ethic, creativity, and attention to detail set her apart from other volunteers. The activities she created were fun, engaging, and supported the children's therapeutic needs. Currently, Flora is in her first year at the University of Miami, pursuing her undergraduate in education. We are so appreciative of her work, and we are excited to see all she accomplishes in the future.
Shelly Baer is an incredible partner of CARD and an asset to the disability advocacy community! At UM Mailman Center, she runs multiple community engagement programs that train the next generation of advocates, including high school students, med school students, developmentally disabled adults, and community professionals; she has overseen the development of a primary care clinic for adults with Developmental Disabilities at U Health; and she is the founder of the Bold Beauty Project which highlights the beauty of disability! Thanks for all that you do for our community Shelly!
Shae Williams was an exemplary employee during her time at CARD where she facilitated our Autism Multicultural Collective which enhanced our outreach to underserved communities through strategic partnerships. She has continued that work, expanded her reach, and deepened her impact through her current work at the Children’s Services Council in Broward County.
Michael Gavila is being recognized this year for his second-to-none community engagement throughout South Florida. Michael is a self-advocate that walks the walk, inspiring others to take notice of CARD and the many issues facing our constituents.
Ariana Habib has been chosen as one of this year’s outstanding self-advocates for her leadership role as a Constituency Board member of CARD. Ariana has represented CARD and the autism community at many events, conferences, teacher institutes, and more. She is a wonderful role model for autistic adults in our community and beyond.
It brings us so much pride to acknowledge Summit Aerospace as our Outstanding Business Partner! They have actively engaged in employee training sessions to enhance understanding and incorporation of autism awareness across their entire staff and managerial team. Furthermore, they have effectively recruited and seamlessly integrated individuals with autism into their workforce, valuing them as integral team contributors. Their exemplary practices set a pioneering example, showcasing the advantages of embracing inclusive hiring within our community!
We are proud to honor Marilisa Lawless as one of this year’s Outstanding Professionals! A much-deserved recognition as she goes above and beyond for our CARD families. Marilisa spreads kindness and compassion in every life she touches through her work. Marilisa is a mother of an adult with autism, and she has participated in many of our CARD groups over the years.
Dr. Laura Olivos is being celebrated this year for her role as a leading professional in our community with both the passion and compassion to serve our CARD constituents with the respect and dignity they deserve. Dr. Olivos is a wonderful collaborator, gifted clinician, and creative and innovative psychologist who provides comprehensive support for our shared clients.
Lesly Quintanilla Lopez is being recognized for her outstanding assistance to individuals with autism and related disabilities through her 15 years at the Center for Independent Living of the Keys (CIL). Whenever we have reached out to Lesly, she has been extremely responsive and helpful. Whether to access services at CIL or as a social security benefits planner. Your work makes our community a better place for adults with disabilities.
We would like to thank Samantha Sehter and Ali Nyman from Remarkable Disability Services for their outstanding contributions to the community. They have created an engaging online platform for teens and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to learn, interact, and feel inspired. Their achievements are truly remarkable!
The Taft Foundation is being recognized for years of extraordinarily generous support of our CARD programs and services. The Taft Foundation is a leader in philanthropy in the world of developmental disabilities, and their impact has been monumental to programs like ours and so many of our community partners. We at CARD are forever grateful for the trust they have shown in our ability to leverage their funding to impact our constituents and community in innovative and impactful ways.
Ivan Deveaux has been selected by his peers as one of this year’s Robin Parker Inspiration Award winners for the depth of his commitment to his clients and their families, as well as his colleagues at CARD and throughout South Florida. Ivan represents the best of what it means to be a CARD staff member. He cares deeply, always delivers, and never gives up when finding ways to support his clients. His loving approach to the work is what reminds us all of our late colleague, Dr. Robin Parker for whom this award is named.
Dr. Carole Zangari, our amazing NSU CARD Satellite Executive Director, has been selected by her peers to be the co-recipient of the Robin Parker Inspiration Award for her passion for excellence in professional development and service delivery. Dr. Zangari sets the bar high and encourages all those who interact with her to reach it. She was the closest colleague of Dr. Robin Parker, our former director for whom this award is named, and Carole represents us all that was so special and inspiring about Robin.