



SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

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San Francisco General Hospital Foundation Announces 2018 Heroes & Hearts Award Recipients

Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital heroes to be honored at annual luncheon on the field of AT&T Park

SAN FRANCISCO (January 22, 2018) — **San Francisco General Hospital Foundation** (The Foundation) today announced the recipients of the **2018 Heroes & Hearts Award** which recognizes extraordinary San Francisco Bay Area heroes who exemplify the “go above and beyond” spirit of the Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center (ZSFG). The 2018 heroes are **Karen Aguilar**, Lead Patient Navigator of Gender Health SF at San Francisco Department of Public Health, and **Caroline Watson**, Social Justice and Communications Coordinator at ZSFG’s HIVE. The individuals will be honored at the Foundation’s annual **Heroes & Hearts** luncheon on **Thursday, February 15, 2018 at AT&T Park**. Tickets for the luncheon are now available online at SFGHF.org/HeroesHeartsTickets.

“It is truly an honor to recognize Karen Aguilar and Caroline Watson for their dedication and immense contributions in their respective fields,” says **Amanda Heier**, San Francisco General Hospital Foundation Chief Executive Officer. “Each of these individuals put tremendous effort into ensuring that their fellow San Franciscans are safe, healthy, accepted, and protected, while going above and beyond to transform the lives of those around them. We celebrate these heroes who inspire those around them, both patients and colleagues alike.”

2018 HEROES & HEARTS AWARDEES –

Karen Aguilar is being recognized for always going above and beyond for her patients and her community; fighting daily to get her patients’ access to the best care; to identify when that care isn’t adequate and for her work improving the care which transsexual, transgender and Gender non-conforming people receive. As the Lead Patient Navigator at San Francisco Department of Public Health’s Gender Health SF and a bilingual speaker, Karen works with all of the Spanish

speaking gender patients – nearly half of the entire program. Gender Health SF navigates patients through gender surgeries, procedures, and resources in order to help members of the transsexual, transgender and Gender non-conforming community achieve their dreams. Karen's clients face insurance barriers, language barriers, uninformed providers, changing health care protocols, surgical providers, poverty, homelessness, health problems, and a range of psychosocial issues related to discrimination and stigma.

The transsexual, transgender and Gender non-conforming community is one of the most discriminated against and the community often has an adversarial relationship with the healthcare system. In addition to previously experienced discrimination, a large majority of the transgender community experience a language barrier with health providers. Gender Health SF works to bridge this language barrier and to re-engage the community with health services. Their reach goes far beyond San Francisco, with the Gender Health SF program serving as an example to clinics all over the country.

In 2014, Karen herself was a patient of the Gender Health SF program. After her surgeries, she was invited to speak about her experiences to help others in the program, and then, following her talks, she was asked to be a permanent member of the staff. Many of Karen's colleagues at Gender Health are also members of the transsexual, transgender and Gender non-conforming community. Their first-hand experience helps them explain the multi-level process and the rollercoaster of emotions their patients will go through during the transition. Many members of the transgender community dream of this surgery all their life, and believe they will die if they don't have it. The staff at Gender Health SF, alongside Karen, understand this first hand and help to make this happen in a safe environment. Karen has been a community health worker and leader in San Francisco for many years, as well as a part-time student at City College of San Francisco pursuing a degree in Public Health. She was part of the first Trans Health Study conducted in San Francisco and, up until last year, she participated as a Research Assistant with the Trans*National Cohort Study.

Caroline Watson is the Social Justice and Communications Coordinator at HIVE: a hub of positive reproductive and sexual health. Caroline is being recognized for her fierce commitment to community inclusion and improving positive and supportive communications around HIV, advancing HIVE communications and stories through blog content development and advocacy through the [Share Your Story Campaign](#), and challenging providers to use non-stigmatizing language with their patients through the [#LanguageMatters initiative](#). In addition to spearheading these campaigns, Caroline also founded the [#WeAreAllWomen](#) initiative, a focus on the shared experiences and empowerment of transgender and cisgender women.

The HIVE clinic and program has provided preconception and prenatal care to women and couples affected by HIV since 1989. Their mission is to advance reproductive and sexual wellness for individuals, families and communities affected by HIV in San Francisco and beyond, so that people affected by HIV can have safe pregnancies, reproductive autonomy, access to state-of-the-art health care, and enjoyable sex lives. At HIVE, Caroline empowers thousands of people of a wide diversity of backgrounds, circumstances and identities to share their stories of living with or being affected by HIV on a global platform. The reach of the website extends far beyond San Francisco, with an online presence of 195,011 global visitors per year. This helps to fight the stigma and to create better health outcomes for people affected by HIV.

In addition to her position at HIVE, Caroline is studying Social Welfare at UC Berkeley and plans on becoming a medical social worker specializing in HIV. She is the first community member of

the Centers for Disease Control's Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission Stakeholders Group and the Expert Panel on Reproductive Health and Preconception Care.

Heroes & Hearts Event Sponsors include: Genentech, Wells Fargo, Bon Appétit, Giants Enterprises, Alaska Airlines, Blue Shield of California, Sarah & Jason Dilullo, Intel, Kaiser Permanente, The Stanley S. Langendorf Foundation, UnitedHealth Group, Workday, and UCSF.

Heroes & Hearts Media Sponsors include: Alice, Comcast, CrossingsTV, JCDecaux, KCBS All News 740 AM and 106.9 FM, NBC Bay Area, OutFront Media, *San Francisco Business Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco* magazine, SFGATE.com, and Telemundo.

About the Hearts in San Francisco Project

Introduced in 2004, the citywide public art project, '[Hearts in San Francisco](#),' featured 131 five-foot tall Heart Sculptures designed by both local and national established and emerging artists. The unique works of art were featured in plazas, parks and on street corners throughout San Francisco. Since the inaugural year, more than 350 Hearts have been created to benefit programs at Zuckerberg San Francisco General (ZSFG). Hearts are auctioned and sold, and more than \$11 million in proceeds have supported San Francisco General Hospital Foundation's efforts to fund innovative projects and initiatives that provide high quality compassionate care at ZSFG.

About the Heroes & Hearts Luncheon

The Heroes & Hearts luncheon brings the community together to celebrate the essential role ZSFG plays in our City and its community impact, raising funds to support The Foundation's mission and honor local heroes whose actions improve our community. The 2018 event takes place on Thursday, February 15 at AT&T Park with doors opening at 11 a.m. Sponsorship levels for the Heroes & Hearts event begin at \$7,500. For more information about the event or to learn more about sponsorship opportunities, call 628-206-5803 or visit <http://sfghf.org/events/heroes-hearts/>.

About San Francisco General Hospital Foundation

San Francisco General Hospital Foundation (the Foundation) is an independent, 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation that provides philanthropic support to Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center (Zuckerberg San Francisco General). The Foundation is dedicated to promoting excellence in research, education and care for all at Zuckerberg San Francisco General. Funds raised by the Foundation support Zuckerberg San Francisco General's long history of providing compassionate and high-quality health care to all in San Francisco and northern San Mateo County. For more information, please visit SFGHF.org and Facebook.com/SFGHFoundation.



Karen Aguilar, Lead Patient Navigator of Gender Health SF
at San Francisco Department of Public Health



Caroline Watson, Social Justice and Communications
Coordinator at Zuckerberg San Francisco General's HIVE

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