
NEWS

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ARIZONA DISABILITY ADVOCATE AMONG 10 AMERICANS TO RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARD

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Presents 2009 Community Health Leaders Award to David Carey in Recognition of His Service to People with Disabilities

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) today announced the selection of David Carey, chair of Inspire Human Services Co-op in Phoenix, to receive a Community Health Leaders Award. He is one of 10 extraordinary Americans who will receive the RWJF honor for 2009 at a ceremony this evening at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Carey, who became a quadriplegic following a gunshot accident in 1989, has been a tireless advocate for health care access for the disabled. He is being honored for his work as chair of Inspire Co-op, which helps people with disabilities to lead independent lives, and for his activism to assure safe public transportation options for persons with physical disabilities. Carey led the creation of Inspire Co-op—one of the first self-directed cooperatives in the United States—that gives members the power to better manage services such as habilitation and attendant care while sharing in the ownership and guidance of the company. He also helped the organization secure long-term contracts to provide services to people with disabilities.

Furthermore, Carey's efforts extend to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have access to public transportation. Carey successfully worked with the city of Tempe, Ariz., to put up traffic lights so people with disabilities living almost a mile away from the closest bus stop had safe access to that bus stop.

Carey has overcome daunting physical and health challenges to help others with disabilities. In 1989, Carey, then a promising student athlete at Scottsdale Community College, was shot in the back when his roommates accidentally discharged a gun. After the accident, he lived in a nursing home for two years. While there, and determined to reclaim his life, Carey continued his schooling and finished his bachelor's degree in physical education at Arizona State University. Upon graduation he pursued a career helping others with disabilities maintain their independence and live in communities instead of institutions.

"David Carey's life story and work exemplify the mission of the RWJF Community Health Leaders Award. Each day, he overcomes his personal obstacles to help others with disabilities to live independent, healthier lives," said Janice Ford Griffin, national program director for the award.

"I have been fortunate to have a network of family members, caregivers and mentors that have made it possible for me to work to help others with disabilities," Carey said. "I hope that the nation's health reform efforts make it easier for those with disabilities to also access the health care coverage and support services to maintain independent lives in their communities." He credits the Arizona Bridge to Independent Living (ABIL) for enabling him to pursue his advocacy work and establish the Inspire Co-op.

Southwest Institute for Families & Children director, Karen Burstein, said that “Phoenix is indeed fortunate to have David Carey living and working in our midst. His talents and advocacy skills are part of the fabric that makes us one of the most livable cities in the United States, especially for our citizens with disabilities.”

The Community Health Leaders Award honors exceptional men and women from all over the country who overcome significant obstacles to tackle some of the most challenging health and health care problems facing their communities and the nation. The award elevates the work of the leaders by raising awareness of their contributions through national visibility, a \$125,000 award and networking opportunities. This year the Foundation received 532 nominations from across the United States and selected 10 outstanding individuals who have worked to improve health conditions in their communities with exceptional creativity, courage and commitment.

There are nine other 2009 Community Health Leaders in addition to Carey. Their work includes oral health services for remote communities; a marriage between health care and legal aid; a mentoring program to help disadvantaged youth pursue health careers; care for victims of torture; an innovative approach to combat obesity; culturally sensitive and appropriate health care for Cambodian-American immigrants; quality health care for Native American elders; low-cost family planning and health care for women, men and teens; and mental health services for the underserved.

Since 1993 the program has honored more than 160 Community Health Leaders in nearly every state and the District of Columbia. Nominations can be submitted for the 2010 Community Health Leaders Award through October 15, 2009. For details on how to submit a nomination, including eligibility requirements and selection criteria, visit

www.communityhealthleaders.org.

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The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) established the Community Health Leaders (CHL) Award to recognize individuals who overcome daunting obstacles to improve health and health care in their communities. Today, there are 173 outstanding Community Health Leaders in nearly all states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. For more information, visit www.communityhealthleaders.org.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years, the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.