



The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
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For immediate release

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The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Man & Woman of the Year Winners Announced

Bay Area professionals raise funds to fight blood cancer

San Francisco, CA (June 7, 2011) - The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) announced the winners of its 21st annual Man & Woman of the Year fundraising campaign on June 4, 2011 at the San Francisco Fairmont. Man of the Year, **Mark Zafra** and Woman of the Year, **Rosemary Gong** received their honors at the grand finale event emceed by KRON-TV's Vicki Liviakias and 2009 Man of the Year Bill Shen.

The grand finale event marked the end of a ten-week fundraising competition to raise funds for blood cancer research and patient services. Every dollar counted as one vote and the candidates with the most votes received the titles. Man of the Year **Zafra**, raised an impressive \$105,521.00, while his counterpart, Woman of the Year, **Gong**, raised an equally notable \$50,379.00. Both winners are leukemia survivors and will have a LLS funded researcher named in their honor.

The eleven candidates raised over \$315,000 in ten weeks in honor of local blood cancer survivors and the Boy and Girl of the Year, Juan Carlos Zapata and Ruby Grandy, who are both currently undergoing treatment for leukemia. The funds raised will support LLS's mission: to find a cure for leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma and improve the quality of life for patients and their families.

"We are so impressed with this year's candidates' fundraising efforts," said Brian Kinion, Greater San Francisco Bay Area Chapter's LLS Board of Trustees president and 2008 LLS Man of the Year. "Their passion and ingenuity showed with the diverse array of fundraising events they held. Their fundraising achievements will help pave the way for new and improved blood cancer treatments."

The Winners' Stories

2011 Man of the Year, Mark Zafra

Mark, a global sourcing manager at McKesson Corporation, has been active with LLS since 2005. He has had hairy cell leukemia, a rare form of chronic leukemia, since 2005 and has completed almost 30 seasons of marathons, triathlons, hikes and ultra-marathons with Team in Training over the last six years. He currently sits on LLS's Greater San Francisco Bay Area Chapter's Board of Trustees and also created and mentors its Young Professional Board.

"With the help of over 40 committed friends we put on 22 fundraisers in 10 weeks, everything from date auctions and a Giant's tailgate to a 5k run and a gourmet afternoon in Sonoma. My inspiration was friends who are fighting blood cancers or have lost their battles... This was obviously a very personal campaign for me, as my own cancer did not have a treatment until LLS funded one," said Mark.

2011 Woman of the Year, Rosemary Gong

Rosemary, a San Francisco-based author, was suddenly diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) while attending a creative writing workshop at NYU. Once home in San Francisco, she began to navigate her way through the cancer process – educating herself about her illness, learning about emerging treatments, and finding well-grounded support through various organizations and services, including LLS.

“I wanted to use my participation in this event to raise awareness in my community about cancer and treatment options. My campaign and outreach helped break down the stigma associated with cancer in parts of the Chinese community, and it let people know there are many, often life-saving, options to explore,” said Rosemary.

The 2011 Candidates

The complete list of 2011 candidates includes: One World One Voice founder, Sandra Acevedo-Hanns; Aggie Bonpua of Soulmates Wines; Hi Dive owner, John Caine; Belle Pelle Skin Studio’s Shelley Costantini; author Rosemary Gong, Deron Kartoon of Varitan Inc., Capital Solutions; Elizabeth Matzner of Empress PR; Sheryl Nigro of Corporate Edge; Turn, Inc.’s Monika Sola; Kenneth Winn from Merrill Lynch and Mark Zafra of McKesson Corporation.

The runners up in this year’s campaign were John Caine, whose bar “Hi Dive” on the Embarcadero, served as a venue for fundraising events and Monika Sola, whose campaign honored a close friend recently diagnosed with stage four Hodgkin’s lymphoma.

About The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society[®] (LLS) is the world’s largest voluntary health agency dedicated to blood cancer. The LLS mission: Cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin’s disease and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. LLS funds lifesaving blood cancer research around the world and provides free information and support services.

Founded in 1949 and headquartered in White Plains, NY, LLS has chapters throughout the United States and Canada. To learn more, visit www.LLS.org or contact the Information Resource Center at (800) 955-4572, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET. www.LLS.org.

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