

NAMI Greater Houston award honors legacy of Houston business leader Leon C Alderfer

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Greater Houston, the region's oldest grassroots, mental health organization dedicated to serving those affected by mental illnesses is pleased to announce that it has established a legacy award named posthumously for Houston business leader, mental health advocate and philanthropist, Leon C Alderfer. On Friday, January 14, 2022, at 6:30 pm, during the organization's inaugural "Heroes and Hope Across Greater Houston," virtual gala, widow Pat Alderfer, and fellow mental health supporter, Dick Easterwood will pay tribute to Leon, highlighting some of the transformative civic, educational, and philanthropic efforts spearheaded by Leon that continue to benefit people living with mental illnesses in the Greater Houston region.

"Leon experienced the heartbreaking loss of his young adult son who struggled for many years with mental illness," said NAMI Greater Houston's interim executive director Angelina Hudson, MPA. "He could have walked away from NAMI, but instead Leon, along with Pat, turned their family's tragedy into hope through action providing education classes, support groups, public awareness and financial support to help all individuals and families affected by mental illness, and for that, we are grateful."

The Leon C Alderfer - Heroes and Hope Across Greater Houston award will acknowledge the contributions of a deserving, unrecognized or under-recognized individual from Harris, Montgomery or Fort Bend counties who is impacting the social, emotional, or psychological wellness of adults and children—especially those living with mental illnesses through their work, volunteerism, or philanthropy. NAMI Greater Houston will announce the recipient of this honor during the gala.

Heroes and Hope Across Greater Houston award honorees for 2022 include **Dr. Gary Blau**, The Hackett Center for Mental Health at the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute; **Gayle Y. Fisher**, M.Ed., Ed.Tech., Neurodiversity; **Dr. Connie Almeida**, Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services; **Dr. Laurel Williams**, Baylor College of Medicine; **Dr. Precious L. Reimonenq**, Goose Creek CISD and **Mark Carr**, CEO, Christian Brothers Automotive Corporation.

Special appearances are expected by NAMI national medical director, Dr. Ken Duckworth; *The Voice*, Season 20 contestant and recording artist, Dana Monique; and comedian and mental health advocate, Kevin Cotter.

The virtual "Heroes and Hope Across Greater Houston" gala is one of NAMI Greater Houston's primary fundraisers that supports community mental health education programs, peer-facilitated support groups, advocacy initiatives and general operating.

Tickets to this online celebration are \$250 per person and are available along with sponsorship opportunities at www.namigreaterhouston.org. Donations are also accepted to support NAMI Greater Houston adult, youth and community programs in memory of Leon C Alderfer at any time. For more information on donating, please contact Linda Brown at 713-970-4419 or heroes@namigreaterhouston.org.

NAMI Greater Houston is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 1988 by a group of dedicated and caring family members of those living with difficult, yet treatable, mental illnesses. When founding the organization, these family members sought to establish a grassroots organization that would address the increasing need for families and persons affected by mental illness to have a powerful voice in the mental health community.