Schwartz Center Surpasses $1M Goal at Annual Dinner Honoring Three Compassionate Caregivers

First International Recipient of Schwartz Compassionate Caregiver Award Recognized; Maureen Bisognano Delivers Keynote

BOSTON (October 30, 2026)—The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare raised more than $1M, surpassing its goal, at the 31st Annual Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Healthcare Dinner in Boston. Philanthropy funds nearly half of the organization's operating budget, driving essential programs that support caregivers and the compassionate care they provide to patients and families.

This year's keynote speaker, **Maureen Bisognano**, president emerita and senior fellow at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, delivered a keynote in which she spoke about the role compassion plays in making healthcare better for patients, families, and the people who care for them.

Victoria Stevens and Nan Rubin shared how the Schwartz Rounds® program has supported caregivers at The Boston Home, a long-term care facility in Boston for adults who suffer from neurological disorders, including multiple sclerosis.

The evening also honored three recipients of the Schwartz Compassionate Caregiver Award. They are:

- **Malathi Balasundaram, MD**, neonatal intensivist at El Camino Health and clinical professor at the Stanford School of Medicine, Palo Alto, California. Since 2017, she has volunteered her time to lead family-centered care at El Camino Health, treating parents as essential partners rather than visitors. She created a NICU family peer support program and a Family Partnership Council of 52 parent voices, and founded the Family-Centered Care Taskforce, which now has more than 3,800 members. "She helped me find hope when I lost it and nurtured my purpose once I found it," said a former NICU parent.

- **Gerard (Gerry) Duffy**, community nurse for the homeless, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Belfast, Northern Ireland. The first international recipient of the award, Duffy has spent nearly two decades bringing wound care, vaccines, and HIV and hepatitis C screening to people experiencing homelessness across Belfast. The nurse-led doorstep service he helped build is now a core-funded National Health Service team. "Without respect there is no relationship," he says.

- **Tyler Jorgensen, MD**, assistant professor of internal medicine and assistant program director, Hospice and Palliative Medicine Fellowship, Dell Medical School at the University of Texas at Austin. Jorgensen serves on the inpatient palliative medicine team at two Austin hospitals and leads the school's palliative care and geriatrics curriculum. In 2022 he started ATX-VINyL, which brings record players and vinyl to patients, many near the end of life, through 55 to 70 listening experiences a month. "Tyler reminds us that connection and meaning are not extras in healthcare," said a colleague. "They are central to what we do."

Read more about their stories: theschwartzcenter.org/award

"Tonight showed what compassionate care looks like in action. Our speakers and honorees remind us that it starts with seeing each patient as a person, and we are grateful to everyone who helped us support that work," said **Michael Gustafson, MD, MBA,** CEO of the Schwartz Center.

About the Schwartz Compassionate Caregiver Award
Since 1999, the Schwartz Center has honored healthcare professionals who display extraordinary compassion in caring for patients and families. The award recognizes professionals whose achievements have helped create healing healthcare environments for patients, families, colleagues, and communities. Award finalists are chosen by a national review committee. Read more about the award and this year's recipients at theschwartzcenter.org/award.

The Schwartz Center is grateful to **CRICO** for its generous support of the Schwartz Compassionate Caregiver Award. For close to 50 years, CRICO has provided industry-leading medical professional liability coverage, claims management, and patient safety resources to all of the Harvard medical institutions and their affiliates, and is a recognized leader in evidence-based risk management. Through a national data collaborative, Candello, a division of CRICO, provides clinical risk intelligence products and solutions and fosters an active online community of shared learning.

"CRICO has spent decades working to make care safer, and we see every day that compassion is part of that work. These recipients show what it looks like in practice," said **Mark E. Reynolds**, CEO of CRICO. "Behind every good outcome is a caregiver who took time to understand the person in front of them. We are grateful for the chance to celebrate three who do that so well."

About the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare

Founded in 1995, the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare partners with organizations to advance compassion for patients, care teams, and their healing relationships.

More than 700 organizations around the world run the Schwartz Rounds® program, which creates dedicated space for caregivers to discuss the emotional dimensions of their work—both the challenges and the joys. Research shows this program strengthens compassion and enhances patient care.

The Schwartz Center is grateful to its Corporate Champions of Compassion, whose year-round support makes this work possible: Covista, CRICO, Foley & Lardner LLP, Mass General Brigham, Massachusetts General Hospital, Mintz, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts.

Visit us at theschwartzcenter.org or follow us on LinkedIn.

Media Contact

Christina Parks

Senior Director of Communications, The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare
cparks@theschwartzcenter.org
508-942-6551

###