

## Society: 'Part the Cloud' for rays of hope

By Janet Duca Norton For The Daily News San Jose Mercury News

Posted:

MercuryNews.com

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The Part the Cloud luncheon benefit for the Alzheimer's Research Foundation on Jan. 29 was a sold-out success. More than 300 guests attended the luncheon that provided educational and personal insights into the nature of the disease.

Chairwoman Mikey Hoag's description of Alzheimer's, was short and packed a punch. "It's moving from losing your car keys to not knowing what they are. It's specific and devastating," she said.

Speaker Dr. Michael Weiner, principal investigator of the Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative, said the project offers hope of being a new way of detecting the disease and, ultimately, the way to prevent it.

The afternoon started with a star-power video, the trailer for a documentary on Grammy award-winning country singer Glen Campbell's life with Alzheimer's. Slated to be released next year, the film shows the personal side of Campbell and his family; they agreed to do the project with the hope it would help other people cope with the disease.

"I'm so grateful you're here. The video reminds us we have to work together," Hoag said. "Those affected by the disease and family members gather to share experiences and learn more about it. This could be ground zero for a cure in our backyard, Silicon Valley."

It took courage for Susan Harvell, 53, to relate her candid description of her life with the disease. Diagnosed with Alzheimer's a year ago, she had been a highpowered human resources CEO, and now has to depend on her husband and daughter for care, including driving her everywhere.

Guest speaker Mark Shriver, CEO of Children First and son of Eunice Kennedy Shriver and Sargent Shriver, talked about his book, "A Good Man: Rediscovering My Father, Sargent Shriver." It's a warm remembrance of his father with a message of hope. Guests took home a copy of his book based on the last decade of his father's life.

Shriver said, "Alzheimer's is a "brutal and non-discriminatory disease. This group (Part the Cloud) is a model for the rest of the country. My father would be excited -- it's about helping others."

A highlight of the event was Hoag's presentation of two Bay Area research physicians who have received the first funds from the Alzheimer's Part the Cloud Grant Program for their innovative research.

Dr. Adam Boxer, director of the Neurosciences Clinical Research Unit at UCSF, works to develop new treatments and biomarkers for neurodegenerative disease. His focus is on the pathogenic proteins tau and TDP-43.

Dr. Frank Longo of Stanford has pioneered the development of molecules that treat Alzheimer's. Longo founded Pharmatrophix in 2006 to produce these compounds. Phase I clinical human trials will begin this year.

Guests saluting the honorees included Lisa Goldman, Lisa Schatz, Nanci Fredkin, Susan Hyatt, Dagmar

Dolby, Sara Abassi, Betsy Dixon, Betsy Baum, Bill Brady and Eve Jaffe. Their attendance made it possible for Hoag and her co-chairwoman Melissa Badger to say the event doubled their financial goal.

In an email interview, Hoag said, "Funds raised at our 2012 'Part the Cloud' gala are already at work in our community and will make an immediate impact."

### Canopy's Tree Planting

A very Palo Alto project is the annual Mayor's Ceremonial Tree Planting and party presented by Canopy, the nonprofit organization that looks after Palo Alto's trees. The Jan. 31 event was held at Cogswell Plaza on Lytton Avenue with an awards reception at Avenidas Senior Center.

Mayor Gregg Scharff performed digging duties at the 17th annual event. He was encouraged by fellow council members and their spouses, along with members of Canopy.

Following tradition at the post-planting party, Canopy presented awards to volunteers for their work in the care and propagation of trees in Palo Alto and neighboring communities.

Arnold Soforenko Awards for outstanding action in the support of the urban forest were presented to two groups of citizen volunteers.

Before presenting the awards, Executive Director Catherine Martineau said, "There is a common theme. That theme is 'team work.' Canopy cannot do it alone, the city cannot do it alone, either. It takes the entire community to care for our urban forest."

Members of the Lytton Avenue Project were saluted for their work in preserving the large coastal oak at the building site of the new project at 265 Lytton Ave.

"The Friends of George" -- Carol Kiparsky, Casey Leedom, Beth Bunnenberg, Urban Cummings, Michael Meyer (Michael Meyer Fine Wood Working), the Eng Family, Connie Jo Cotton, Elisabeth Rubinfien, Angela Leung, Catherine Cohen, Mike Sartor (City of Palo Alto), Peter Jensen (City of Palo Alto), and Joe Rapanut and tree crew (City of Palo Alto)--worked together to memorialize the iconic coast live oak, George, which is 200 to 300 years old, at 816 Cowper St. in Palo Alto, and replanted the site with a valley oak.

Dating back to the "Save the Oaks" campaign in 1914, Palo Alto environmentalists have worked hard to protect the famous trees. Owners of Ford Model Ts wanted to remove oaks that were in the middle of several downtown streets. Fans of the oaks prevailed in the election.

Out on a Limb Awards went to volunteers Bronyn Alexander (for his young-tree care at the Belle Haven Elementary School) and Scott Wells (for planning and carrying out the 2012 young tree survey).

A pair of summer interns, Russell Langston and Reed Garber, received Young Forester Awards for their exceptional work.

Julien Levy received his Forester Award for spearheading the "Reforest San Bruno" campaign and organizing a large-scale community planting in the area of the 2010 San Bruno gas line explosion.

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