

# *the Voice*



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*Cesar's Journey  
of Courage*

*Radiant  
Health  
Centers*  
expands mental  
health services  
to the broader  
LGBTQ+ community

*The Joy* of  
PHILANTHROPY

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## Our Mission

Radiant Health Centers provides the LGBTQ+ community medical services that are compassionate and comprehensive while continuing to serve those living with and affected by HIV.



## A Message from *the Executive Director*

### Dear Friend,

Together, we have made great strides to end the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Orange County and expand our services to the broader LGBTQ+ community. We at Radiant Health Centers are honored by the trust that has been placed in us by our clients who rely on our professional staff to provide expert and stigma-free treatment and counseling, by our donors who support our mission and vision to build a healthier community and by our volunteers who give their time to make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

We take our responsibility of stewardship very seriously. You can trust us to make the best use of our resources to provide the services that are crucial to so many of our community members who otherwise would go without proper care and without the basic necessities needed to live a healthy life.

In fact, this careful management of resources has made it possible for us to expand our important mental health services to the entire LGBTQ+ community—not just those living with HIV and AIDS. Working in tandem with our other comprehensive services, Radiant Health Centers' mental health program helps our clients address problems like depression, anxiety, bullying, domestic violence and other issues that would otherwise delay or prevent them from rebuilding their lives.

As I have often said, we can't do our vital work without the help of our generous supporters and volunteers. We are eternally grateful for your dedication and generosity and we are proud to stand alongside you to fight to end the HIV epidemic, once and for all.

Yours in service,



Philip Yaeger  
*Executive Director/CEO*



# CESAR'S JOURNEY OF COURAGE

Cesar has overcome so many obstacles in his young life, but his biggest accomplishment by far is staying optimistic and healthy nearly four years after being diagnosed with HIV.

Cesar has not faced that challenge alone.

"The help I received from Radiant Health Centers has been invaluable," says Cesar. "I'm not sure I would be here without it."

Cesar, who grew up in Mexico, lost his mom at 9 years old, and had to leave school shortly thereafter to support his family. When he was 17 years old, he experienced his life's second major challenge. He moved by himself from Mexico to Orange County because he feared for his life as an openly gay man in Mexico.

Leaving his family and everything he knew behind to seek a new and more accepting life for himself was an extremely difficult choice but he felt he had no other option.

"I had a friend who helped me when I first arrived," says Cesar. "He gave me a place to stay, a shirt, a pair of pants and a towel. It was all I had. It was awful being without my family because they mean everything to me."

In Orange County he was able to work at a landscaping business and get his GED. He then went to school to get his Associate degree and to become a nursing assistant.

Cesar made new friends and started dating. He had a friend who was HIV positive, so he knew the importance of protecting himself and his partner. A few months after he ended a long-term relationship, he started getting night sweats and came down with flu-like symptoms.

"I just knew something wasn't right," says Cesar. "When I got the

results from the HIV test, my world just stopped. I asked to be alone for one hour at the testing center before I could even speak to anyone."

Adjusting to his HIV status was difficult. The stigma associated with HIV was debilitating and Cesar did not feel like he could share his diagnosis with anyone except for his friend who was also HIV positive. Cesar felt like he would be alone for the rest of his life. He spent nights crying and worrying that his family would not love him anymore.

During a doctor's visit, Cesar confided that he was feeling depressed and had suicidal thoughts. That doctor's appointment turned out to be life-changing.

"My doctor referred me to Radiant Health Centers, and I started seeing one of their therapists," says Cesar. "Therapy was a turning point. It made me feel secure about who I am, and able to see the opportunities out there."

With his therapist's help, Cesar found the courage to share his status with his family and was relieved to learn that he had their full support. It was like a weight had been lifted off his back. He started feeling like himself again.

Now, Cesar would like to help other people living with HIV. He relies on his faith and his love for life to carry him through.

He is hoping to use his story to make others aware of the medical and emotional support that is available at Radiant Health Centers. By telling his story he hopes others will seek help and will find it in this safe and stigma-free environment.

"If anyone is going through the same situation, I want them to know that there is hope," says Cesar. "There are always people willing to accept you for who you are. I know firsthand."

# PHILANTHROPY

The word “philanthropy” has a multitude of meanings and interpretations. The dictionary’s definition lends credence to a variety of thoughts when it describes philanthropy, a noun, as:

1. Goodwill, an active effort to promote human welfare
2. An act or gift done or made for humanitarian purposes
3. An organization distributing or supported by funds set aside for humanitarian purposes

**By Larry Will**  
*Radiant Health Centers Board Member*

While philanthropy is traditionally viewed in monetary terms it is also critical to include philanthropic acts as well. Volunteers of all types, from Board and committee members to pantry service providers and event planners, contribute in a vital way to reduce overhead and increase the effectiveness of a nonprofit’s funds. Radiant Health Centers greatly appreciates every gift, no matter its amount or timing. Each and every gift is used to support its client-first-centric philosophy and allows provision of more assistance and services to those in greatest need.

I encourage each reader to change your definition of philanthropy from a noun to a verb. Foster your own sense of philanthropy then encourage others to do the same.

The reward of giving to those whom you may never meet is staggering and cannot be measured in dollars alone. One smile from someone who has received your gift of love, your philanthropy, will convince you it is one of the best uses you can make of your resources. Whether your gift is monetary or service, you will never regret anything you have contributed.

Philanthropy’s love of people is embodied in the guiding principles of an ancient philosophy: “Good thoughts, good words, good deeds.” Selflessly helping others brings more reward than any other action. I challenge you to start, continue and expand your philanthropic mindset.



# PHILANTHROPY IN ACTION

## An interview with Karla Kjellin-Elder

Jeff and Karla Elder are long-standing supporters of Radiant Health Centers. Their history of philanthropy began before they were married when Jeff was contributing through his church and volunteering on mission trips to Guadalajara and Karla donated her time to various charity organizations.

Over time, and especially when their children were older, their philanthropic outreach became much wider. Karla stated how she and Jeff have found giving to be their most rewarding activity.

"It does your heart good," explains Karla.

Jeff and Karla were first introduced to Radiant Health Centers (then known as ASF) at the Gala held at the Orange County Fairgrounds back in 2000. Their positive impression of this event became the impetus in deciding to be more involved in supporting Radiant Health Centers.

While at first focusing on monthly

donations, Karla soon became involved with the food pantry and food delivery service while Jeff was seated on the Board of Directors, of which he became President. The couple also found time to chair Radiant Health Centers' annual Gala twice.

The take-away gems from this conversation with Karla are profound. Specifically mentioned were:

- People are willing to help a good cause when asked
- There is a rewarding feeling watching those you mentor become philanthropic in their everyday lives
- There is a ripple effect of engaging others
- Make it a habit to help someone every day
- Remember that little acts do make a difference
- Tell yourself that if you can do it, you should do it

We at Radiant Health Centers are so grateful for the inspiration and role models Jeff and Karla continue to provide. They not only talk the talk, they truly walk the walk. Thank you, Jeff and Karla.

# RADIANT HEALTH CENTERS EXPANDS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO THE BROADER LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY



In 2018, Radiant Health Centers expanded its mental health services to the entire LGBTQ+ community, as a part of its promise to expand services until there are no new HIV transmissions in Orange County. The expanded mental health services are open to people at least 12 years old, regardless of HIV status.

Since the services were expanded, Radiant Health Centers' counselors have seen almost 160 patients and helped 25 families.

"We are honored to be in the position to make a difference in so many lives in Orange County," said Sandra Boodman, senior director of programs. "Many of our clients have expressed to us how much our counseling program has helped them and their loved ones."

With more than 12,000 LGBTQ+ residents in Orange County who are underinsured and living at or below the poverty level, we know that our expanded services are greatly needed. Radiant Health Centers offers hope to those who have few or no options to receive this high quality of care outside of our programs.

Discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals, as well as health disparities, takes a terrible human toll and is associated with high rates of mental illness, substance abuse, suicide and increased risk for HIV. We know the only way to get to zero new HIV transmissions is to address these health inequities and expand services to the broader LGBTQ+ community.

*To learn more about our mental health services, visit [www.radianthealthcenters.org](http://www.radianthealthcenters.org).*

## MEMORIALS

### **In Memory of Mary Yaeger**

Ms. Susan Caumiant

### **In Memory of Mary Yaeger**

Ms. Heidi Cortese

### **In Memory of Mary Yaeger**

Mr. Grant & Ms. Julie Wright

### **In Memory of Mary Yaeger**

Mr. Lawrence W. Will D.D.S. and Mr. Michael Shapiro

### **In Memory of Mary Yaeger**

Dr. Duane Vajgrt, M.D. & Mr. Jeffrey L. Benedick

### **In honor of her grandchildren**

Ms. Doris Williams

### **In honor of my niece and nephew (Li'am and Shai'el), for their Chanukah gift**

Ms. Norri & Mr. Warren Hennagin

### **In Memory of Ruby and Dino Gomez**

Mr. Arthur R. Gomez

### **In honor of Jeff Benedick's commitment to the agency and to support the agency**

Dr. Daniel E. Haspert, M.D.

### **In memory of Anthony "Tony" Codianni**

Mr. Lawrence W. Will D.D.S. and Mr. Michael Shapiro

### **In Memory of Ruby and Dino Gomez**

Mr. Arthur R. Gomez



# RADIANT HEALTH CENTERS' ANNUAL GALA, RADIANT ROYALE, RAISES MORE THAN \$234,000

*The funds raised will support services for the  
LGBTQ+ community and the individuals living with HIV*

**R**adiant Health Centers' Annual Gala, "Radiant Royale," raised more than \$234,000 that will support Radiant Health Centers' expanded services for the LGBTQ+ community, along with the social services programs that help individuals living with HIV and AIDS in Orange County.

Radiant Royale, held on Jan. 26 at Santa Ana's Yost Theatre, celebrated the golden age of Las Vegas (the 1950s and 1960s)

and featured dinner, dancing and entertainment by Michael Shapiro, Toni Malone and Mindy Kim.

"The night was absolutely wonderful and we are so grateful to our generous supporters," said Larry Will, Radiant Health Centers gala committee co-chair. "The funds raised will make a tremendous difference in the lives of individuals who depend on the healthcare, counseling and food services they receive from Radiant Health Centers."



## SAVE THE DATE FOR AIDS WALK 2019

Join us on June 1 to help us end the HIV and AIDS epidemic. This year's walk will be held in Huntington Beach on the boardwalk. What better way to spend a summer day than with friends and family.

***Register today!***

**TO REGISTER TO WALK OR TO FORM A  
WALK TEAM, CONTACT ANA MARTINEZ AT  
949-809-5768 OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
AT [WWW.RADIANTHEALTHCENTERS.ORG/AWOC](http://WWW.RADIANTHEALTHCENTERS.ORG/AWOC)**



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Questions & Feedback:**

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# SAVE THE DATE

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## **June 1**

*AIDS Walk 2019*

*Huntington Beach Boardwalk*

## **October**

*OC Ride for AIDS*

## **February 2020**

*Annual Gala*