

## **BRAVE Awards Recipients Announced**

Everyday heroes from around the world who selflessly care for others in the face of adversity honored by Shire in international caregiver awards program.

**Dublin, Ireland – November 27, 2013** – Selflessness, determination, courage and hope. These are among the qualities that describe the eighteen caregivers from around the world who have been selected as recipients of the 2013 Shire BRAVE Awards, an international program that honors the bravery and devotion of non-professional carers. The BRAVE Awards celebrate the commitment of everyday people – non-professional caregivers – who provide consistent and dedicated care for others.

Recipients of a BRAVE Award represent the millions of family caregivers, many of whom balance a job and household tasks at the same time as seeing to the intense medical and social needs of another person. Their consistent care of others is core to the way they live their lives, and the BRAVE Awards are one small way to recognize these individuals who work tirelessly to give their loved ones as normal and healthy a life as possible.

The 2013 program received 340 nominations from 16 countries. Each nomination was reviewed and ranked by the BRAVE Awards Selection Committee, which is made up of Shire employees from around the world and two independent caregiving experts. The Selection Committee experts for 2013 were Frank Goodwin, President of EuroCarers, the European association that provides support, advocacy and resources for unpaid caregivers; and Gail Hunt, President of the U.S.-based National Alliance for Caregiving, a non-profit coalition of national organizations focused on advancing family caregiving through research, innovation and advocacy.

Nominations were reviewed and recipients were selected based on a variety of criteria that include respect, courage, dedication, impact on the care recipient, and length of service as a caregiver. Each recipient of a 2013 BRAVE Award receives \$10,000 USD or the local currency equivalent.

BRAVE Awards Recipients for 2013:

**Karen Allen (UK):** Thanks to Karen's love, support and care, her 18-year old daughter, Holly, who was diagnosed with severe epilepsy and manages other serious health challenges everyday, has lived a life full of joy and promise.

**Suzanne Bradbury (Canada):** This mother of nine children – four of her own and five foster children – epitomizes selflessness. Each of her five foster children is diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Suzanne goes well beyond the role of mother to help these children feel cared for and loved, allowing them to thrive and succeed in school and life.

**Edna Rae Callihan (US):** For more than 22 years, Edna has served as the inspiring matriarch of her family by caring full-time for her granddaughter, Mariah, who was born with the congenital absence of all four limbs. Edna's inspiration and support has allowed Mariah to live as normal and healthy a life as possible, including basic life skills like independent eating and movement, to trying out for the softball team and cheerleading squad, and attending college. Edna's passion for helping Mariah thrive in the face of incredible adversity is inspiring.

**Leanne Clarke (Australia):** Caring for a husband with a rare genetic disorder, can be challenging, but add in a daughter with the same condition, and life can be trying. As the matriarch of her family, Leanne marches on, providing care for her husband, daughter and family in ways that illustrate a dedication that goes above and beyond.

**Michelle Hill (US):** A single mother of four, Michelle cares fulltime for her daughter Paige, who as a baby was diagnosed with a rare genetic disorder. Michelle has put her college studies on hold while working as an aide at the school Paige attends. Her goal is to make sure that the Paige has a life full of love and support.

**Ferrell M Lewis (US):** Ten years ago, at the age of 19, this loving son and brother put his college plans and life ambitions on hold to become a surrogate single parent for his young sister and caretaker for his mother, Darline, who was severely handicapped following an operation to treat degenerative disc problems. Thanks to the care and support he provided his sister, who was in elementary school at the time of their mother's health issues, she is now on track to achieve her graduate degree. Ferrell's sister refers to her brother as her superhero.

**Monica McDivitt (US):** Monica will do anything for her daughter, Sam, who has a chromosome 18q-deletion. This devoted mother has done everything from volunteering for the Special Olympics to serving eight years as Chromosome 18 Registry and Research coordinator. Inspired by Sam's courage, Monica even started a Special Buddies program at the school where Sam is mainstreamed, to foster tolerance and understanding among children.

**Rosa Maria Mora Garcia-Talavera (Spain):** Rosa is a loving caretaker for her two sons, Iván and Adrián, who suffer from both psychological and physical disabilities. Iván is diagnosed with psychological conditions, and Adrián had his arms and legs amputated after being diagnosed with meningococcal sepsis at the age of two. In very difficult circumstances, Rosa has triumphed in her advocacy for their healthcare, helping both of her sons lead fulfilling lives.

**Carmen Mulas (Spain):** Thanks to Carmen's endless devotion, her smiling daughters, Miriam and Erika, are the stars at every family event. Each day, this loving mother dresses, washes and exercises the 15-year-old twins, who have cerebral palsy. Carmen even takes her daughters to ceramics, music and swimming classes, and has a physical therapist and speech therapist visit them every week.

**Maria del Rosario Pascual Lopez (Spain):** Throughout her life, Rosario has cared for elderly neighbors, travelled from her village of Recas to Madrid to treat her dying uncle, and managed the local chapter of Caritas, a humanitarian organization. A single parent, Rosario lives with her 13-year-old daughter, who suffers from several severe health conditions, and her mother, who requires consistent care. She also goes out of her way regularly to help underprivileged families and terminally ill cancer patients.

**Esther Rotter (US):** When Esther's husband, Steven, experienced several strokes and was diagnosed with CNS lupus, which forced him to give up his thriving law practice, she continued to love him unconditionally. Throughout more than 30 years of marriage, Esther supported him as not only his wife, but as speech therapist, counselor, best friend, and so much more. Dealing with everything from Steven's pericarditis and optic neuritis to bladder cancer and other health issues, Esther has provided Steven with a life full of love, just as he has done for her.

**Antonia Salvador (Spain):** Antonia's daughter Vanessa was born with brittle bone disease, and doctors said she wouldn't live for more than four months. Antonia left her career as a nursing assistant to care for her daughter full-time. She taught Vanessa to read and do math, even when the school system would not accept her. Now, an incredible 35 years later, and thanks in great part to the love, encouragement and care provided by her mother, Antonia, Vanessa has a bachelor's degree and recently published her first book, an autobiography called "Soul of Glass."

**Debbie Shonberger (Australia):** When Debbie's daughter, Jess, was just five-months-old she was diagnosed with Caravan disease. Doctors said Jess would live no more than three years, but 21 years later, she is still waking up with a smile each day. Debbie provides around-the-clock care for Jess, often only sleeping three or four hours a night. Despite the profound challenges of being a carer, Debbie remains focused on enjoying the little things in life that she and Jess enjoy everyday.

**John Scott (US):** John has never wavered in his commitment to Paula, his high school sweetheart and wife of 50 years. Paula suffers from front temporal dementia (FTD), a debilitating condition similar to Alzheimer's disease. John refuses to entertain the idea of moving Paula to a nursing facility, instead serving as her full-time caregiver and managing their home and everyday needs, as well as handling chores and basic care for his elderly uncle.

**Theresa Sweeny (US):** Theresa is a single mother and full-time caregiver for her three sons, each of whom has a different rare disease. Noah, her middle son, faces the most serious health challenges. She joined the national organization for this rare disease, raising awareness and funds as an activist for Noah and others with this health condition. While Noah's condition is fatal, Theresa abides by his wish to live as normal a life as possible.

**Mercedes Lopez Torres (Spain):** Mercedes, who suffers from a number of debilitating health conditions herself, has become a fearless advocate and caregiver for her daughter Sofia, who has a rare genetic disease. She also cares for her eight-year-old son. Mercedes recently formed a national association in Spain and organizes public meetings and events around the country to raise awareness and advocate for research around this disease.

**Steve Wagner (US):** Steve has served as his wife's caregiver for more than 20 years since she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Even when Steve found he had prostate cancer and underwent several rounds of chemotherapy in 2007, he never wavered in his devotion to his wife, making sure her health needs came first and allowing her to lead to as healthy and normal a life as possible.

**Merle Zealley (Australia):** Merle's passion for caring comes from her family's history of being diagnosed with a rare genetic disease. Merle cared for and lost her husband and her two daughters to this genetic disease. Today, Merle cares for her two granddaughters, who each live with this rare condition, and she continues to be a champion, raising awareness and funds to help those diagnosed with rare health condition.

To read more about the 2013 BRAVE Awards Recipients visit [www.ShireBRAVEAwards.com](http://www.ShireBRAVEAwards.com).

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**About the Shire BRAVE Awards**

The Shire BRAVE Awards is an international program created by Shire to honor the courage and dedication of individual caregivers. For the Shire Brave Awards, a caregiver is defined as an individual who is providing regular, consistent care for another person(s). The caregiver cannot be a professional healthcare provider and cannot be compensated in any formal way through their efforts as a caregiver. The caregiver can be a relative, neighbor, or friend who gives their time, support, and compassion regularly, helping another person(s) who is (partly or wholly) unable to care for themselves due to health issues, injury, or other extenuating circumstance. For further information on the Shire BRAVE Awards, including official rules, legal disclosures, and privacy policy please visit [www.ShireBRAVEAwards.com](http://www.ShireBRAVEAwards.com).

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