

World AIDS Day Commissioner's Special Recognition Awards

TOPIC AREA CRITERIA

HIV: Commitment to reducing new HIV diagnoses, promoting access to prevention services and/or support strategies to improve viral load suppression among those living with HIV. Nominee must have demonstrated innovative interventions that promote HIV screening, access to PrEP and/or PEP, rapid access to treatment for individuals newly diagnosed with HIV and/or linkage and retention in care to achieve individual viral suppression.

LGBTQ: Commitment and contribution to improving the health and wellness of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals.

Drug User Health: Commitment and contribution to improving the health and wellness of persons who use drugs.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs): Commitment and contribution to reducing the impact of STIs.

Hepatitis C: Commitment to eliminating Hepatitis C by promoting Hepatitis C testing, ensuring timely linkage to care and improving access to Hepatitis C care, treatment and cure.

Youth Sexual Health: Commitment and contribution to ensuring the availability of comprehensive, age appropriate, medically accurate sexual health information and quality health services for New York State youth (ages 13-24).

Ken Dunning Trauma-Informed Care Memorial Award: In 2018, in recognition and memory of Ken Dunning, Onondaga Nation, Beaver Clan, the Ken Dunning Trauma-Informed Care Advocate Supporter Award was created. Ken was a member of the AIDS Institute's Trauma-Informed Care Initiative as well as the New York State HIV Advisory Body and Central New York HIV Care Network. He embodied the spirit and commitment of putting Trauma-Informed Care into practice every day. He reminded us of the impact of historical trauma to Native people. The recipient of the Ken Dunning Trauma-Informed Care award will be recognized for continuing Ken's dedication and commitment to aligning the fundamentals of Trauma-Informed Care in the delivery of services to include safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness, empowerment, and cultural competency.

Living Your Truth Through Leadership, Expression and Pride: The Jasán M. Ward Memorial Award

In 2021, in recognition and memory of Jasán M. Ward the "Living Your Truth through Leadership, Expression and Pride Memorial Award" was created. Jasán was a staff member of the AIDS Institute's Office of Planning and Community Affairs (OPCA) where he led and ensured community input was a critical and intentional aspect for all ending the epidemic efforts in New York State. The recipient of this award is a creative thinker and advocate that exemplifies the character and courage through which Jasán lived his life. The recipient of this award has chosen to be bold in using their truth to bring awareness, address inequities, and promote advancement for marginalized groups, such as People of Color (POC), the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Other Identities community (LGBTQ+), and People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Jasán was a role model to many. His shared life experience with those living with HIV was often reimagined through music, poetry, and dance. He reminded us of how the fine arts can heal and reshape lives. The recipient of this award has made efforts to create opportunities and space for others around them to live and thrive in their own truth.

Rising Star: The Leanna Thornton Memorial Award

In 2021, in recognition and memory of Leanna Thornton, mom; advocate; and PLWH; the “Rising Star: The Leanna Thornton Memorial Award” was created. Leana was a vocal consumer, fiercely and unassumingly leading the way for those born with HIV and long-term survivors. As a child, Leanna fought stigma, discrimination, and preconceptions of those living with HIV. She was grace under pressure and a natural leader. Leanna was also a staff member of the AIDS Institute’s Office of the Medical Director (OMD) where she oversaw the public-facing consumer and community involvement components of OMD’s cross program quality management initiatives. Leanna elevated service to PLWH through her work and across all of New York State. Rising many challenges, Leanna reminds us of the important work and service to our community. The recipient of this award is one who themselves is a Rising Star in the field of HIV prevention and treatment. Someone who is called upon and responds to today’s challenges with innovation, determination, and grace.