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INDUSTRY NEWS

Staglins Receive Lifetime Achievement Award for Funding Mental Health Research

by Deborah Parker Wong

At the 2016 Voice Awards, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) honored Napa Valley's Staglin family with a Lifetime Achievement award for fundraising efforts realized through their annual Music Festival for Brain Health, www.music-festival.org.



Garen, Brandon and Shari Staglin receiving their 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award from SAMHSA. PHOTO: JON DIDIER

The Staglins, who over the past 21 years have raised in excess of \$235 million for mental health research, embody the agency's 2016 theme "Strengthening Families through Hope and Help." Their journey began in 1990 when son Brandon was diagnosed with schizophrenia. Realizing that more emphasis was needed on scientific research in the field of mental illness, they began hosting a day-long symposium that grew to include a wine tasting, concert and honorary dinner and become the nation's most successful private fundraising event related to brain illness.

The Voice Awards now in its 11th year honors community leaders, professionals and members of the entertainment industry who work to increase awareness and understanding of mental and substance use disorders. The Staglins joined a full cast of 2016 television and entertainment industry honorees including Rob Reiner and his son Nick for their fictional movie *Being Charlie* depicting addiction, peer and family support, and recovery. For a complete list of the 2016 Voice Award honorees visit, www.samhsa.gov/voice-awards.

"We are deeply honored to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award," said Garen Staglin. "We were fortunate to be able to help Brandon through his illness, but wanted to do more. So instead of running away from the situation, as a family we decided to run towards finding the causes and cures of brain illnesses and started the Music Festival for Brain Health. The past 20 plus years have been simply amazing in terms of the advances we have seen as a result."

Paolo del Vecchio, director of SAMHSA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services charged with improving the behavioral health of the nation, said "The Voice Awards are shining a spotlight on the invaluable role family members can and do have in all aspects of prevention, treatment, and recovery. The Staglins have been recognized with the 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award for their work in raising public awareness around mental health and for supporting research."

According to del Vecchio, the American public knows more about mental illness due in a large part to advocates in the entertainment industry and the increasing number of television shows and films that portray a nuanced and balanced approach towards depicting the lives of people impacted by mental health issues.

"We know from survey research that most Americans get their information about mental illness from television and movies," said del Vecchio who cited classics like *Rainman* and *A Beautiful Mind* and the new FOX series *Empire* for a storyline addressing bipolar disorder, family support, and recovery. "Ours is a message of hope. Treatment is effective and people do recover from mental illnesses to live full and happy lives."

The national recognition by SAMHSA is helping build momentum towards the Staglin family's 22nd Annual Music Festival for Brain Health which is being held at their Staglin Family Vineyard winery in Rutherford on Saturday, September 17.

The symposium features a "rock star" line up of talent with a keynote address by neuroscientist Steve McCarroll, PhD, who is an Associate Professor of Genetics at Harvard Medical School and Director of Genetics for the Broad Institute's Stanley Center for Psychiatric Research and guest speaker David O. Okonkwo, MD, PhD, Professor and Executive Vice Chair of Neurosurgery at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

"Each year we seem to reach new milestones in terms of research and awareness," said Shari Staglin. "As we continue to develop critically important advances and improvements in brain health, we feel more confident that we will find the causes and cures of brain illnesses."



The 22nd Annual Music Festival for Brain Health takes place September 17 at the Staglin Family winery in Napa Valley.
PHOTO: COURTESY MUSIC FESTIVAL FOR BRAIN HEALTH

Shari, Garen, Brandon, and Shannon Staglin will be pouring their Staglin Family wines alongside the cuisine of Chef Curtis de Fede of Miminashi and dozens of Napa and Sonoma wineries that have donated wine in support of the event. The star of this year's afternoon concert will be musician, filmmaker and humanitarian, Michael Franti & Spearhead and the VIP dinner will be prepared by Chef and Owner Gerard Craft from Niche Food Group in St. Louis, Missouri.

From the onset of the annual Music Festival for Brain Health fundraiser, all expenses have been underwritten by sponsors and all proceeds benefit scientific research and treatment programs across the nation.