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### **Pulmonary Hypertension Association Awards *Tom Lantos Innovation in Community Service Awards to Community Activists* Helping to Raise Awareness of Debilitating Lung Disease**

[Silver Spring, MD – April 30, 2015] – The Pulmonary Hypertension Association (PHA) has awarded 12 committed community activists funding for projects to raise awareness of pulmonary hypertension (PH) – a debilitating disease of the lungs that affects the functioning of the heart and can lead to right heart failure. Often misdiagnosed as asthma or other less threatening illnesses, PH symptoms include shortness of breath, chest pain, fainting and chronic fatigue. Without treatment, patients survive on average less than three years from diagnosis.

Known as the *Tom Lantos Innovation in Community Service Awards*, the grants were established to create opportunities for those in the PH community to try out new ideas that can help advance research and awareness of PH. While there is not yet a cure, PH now has 12 FDA-approved treatments, all since 1996; 11 of those since 2001; three since October of 2013. That’s more than all but two of the 7,000 rare diseases identified in the U.S.

“At PHA, we believe those whose lives are touched by this terrible disease deserve a chance to fight back. We have nurtured a community of strong and passionate advocates to advance the cause of finding a cure for pulmonary hypertension,” said PHA President and CEO, Rino Aldrighetti. “Tom Lantos was a strong supporter of the PH community and we continue to honor his legacy by advancing awareness in his name.”

Lantos Award winners include projects from five countries outside the U.S., as well as Puerto Rico. Winning projects include a mobile app that builds on the success of the popular pediatric awareness raising and educational cartoon video series [Lips Painted Blue](#) (a 2012 Lantos Grant), a program to work with community members, faith-based organization and PHA to create culturally sensitive materials to increase awareness of PH in the African American community, and international projects in China, Hungary and other countries to connect with regional governments to raise awareness. The Hellenic Pulmonary Hypertension Association in Greece even created a mascot, Pongo, to help bring the message of hope in the face of difficulties with pulmonary hypertension. A list of all the 2015 Lantos Award winners can be found [here](#).

This program is supported by an unrestricted grant from [Gilead Sciences](#). Twelve grants were awarded this year, each funded to a maximum of \$5,000. Applications were reviewed by an independent committee of PHA community members and community leaders. To learn more about pulmonary hypertension and to get involved to help find a cure, go to [www.PHAssociation.org](http://www.PHAssociation.org).

#### **About the Pulmonary Hypertension Association**

Headquartered in Silver Spring, Md., with a growing list of chapters across the country, the Pulmonary Hypertension Association (PHA) is the country’s leading pulmonary hypertension organization. Its mission is to find ways to prevent and cure pulmonary hypertension and provide hope for the community through support, education, research, advocacy and awareness. PHA does this by connecting and working together with the entire PH community of patients, families and medical professionals. PHA relies on donations to fund its many programs, including early diagnosis efforts, more than 245 support groups around the country and continuing education for medical professionals. For more information go to [PHAssociation.org](http://PHAssociation.org).

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