

Rochester Community Equity Champions announced at Health Equity Conference

By:

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The African American and Latino Health coalitions held the Speak Life! 2023 Health Equity Conference this week at the Strathallan Hotel.

The event, themed ¡Acción ahora!/Action now! aimed to unite, teach, reach and motivate community members to take action toward healing and moving forward in hope.

The annual conference also honored three local leaders with this year's Community Equity Champion Awards.

The 2023 Rev. Dr. Weldon Thomas Faith and Medicine Award was presented to Gina Cuyler, MD, primary care physician and clinical assistant professor at the University of Rochester Medical Center.

The award is named for Rev. Thomas, pastor of New Bethel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Rochester from 2005 to 2019. It is given to a credentialed health professional who has improved the health of marginalized racial and ethnic groups in the nine-county Finger Lakes region.

The 2023 Dr. Constantino Fernandez Community Leadership award was presented to Lucia Colindres, chief program officer at the Ibero-American Action League, Inc. The award honors Fernandez, who was a clinical associate professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology. It is given to an individual who has demonstrated an exemplary level of leadership, advocacy and community engagement to positively impact the health of marginalized racial and ethnic groups in the Finger Lakes region.

The inaugural Edgar Santa Cruz Outstanding Coalition Member Award was presented to Carlos Santana, community builder at Action at Action for a Better Community, Inc. This special recognition is named for Edgar Santa Cruz, a Latino Health Coalition member and an adult social worker at Cameron Community Ministries who was tragically killed in December while walking his dog – the victim of a hit-and-run.

The Speak Life! 2023 Health Equity Conference was made possible by the support of presenting sponsor Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield and keynote sponsor Greater Rochester Health Foundation.