SteppingStone Celebrates 40 Years-Honors Staff

In 1983 during Ronald Reagan’s first term as president, before the internet as we know it and decades before iPhone, SteppingStone was born in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco. The agency was created in the back room of the North of Market Senior Center, now the Curry Senior Center, to help low-income seniors maintain their health and independence.

Over the next four decades the agency would expand to four care Centers and serve thousands of San Franciscan from throughout the city, helping them maintain their health. SteppingStone is now the oldest and largest adult day health organization in San Francisco.

Fulfilling the mission of the agency has always been accomplished by an extraordinary staff, providing care to clients, supporting their caregivers and coordinating with other health providers. They saw the agency through decade after decade, including earthquakes and the COVID pandemic, providing exceptional care for program participants.

It was therefore fitting that on the occasion of the 40th anniversary, the agency chose to honor longtime staff members. It also asked former Executive Directors Elizabeth Boardman and Moli Steinert, each of whom led the organization for over a decade, to join the celebration and to speak.
The celebration was organized by a board committee of Betty Shon, Board President, Maelin Wang and Christina Jung assisted by SteppingStone staff Dan Gallagher, Paul Boneberg, Teresita Lesigues Maratas and LeeAnn Barone. With assistance from board members the agency was able to reserve the Olympic Club Lakeside for the event, a unique and beautiful venue.

The celebration was held on April 27, 2023, a gorgeous spring day. Some ninety guests attended, mostly longtime supporters, staff and board members. It was the first SteppingStone event since 2019 because of the pandemic and many people had not seen others in some years.

After a long cocktail hour with music, guests were served a much-praised dinner buffet. After everyone was seated Board President Betty Shon welcomed the crowd and introduced Executive Director Daniel Gallaher. Dan spoke briefly about the history of the agency and played a short video illustrating SteppingStone’s work. He then introduced former Executive Director Elizabeth Boardman who spoke of the early years of the agency, when staff pushed through inadequate offices and support to deliver exceptional care for clients. Former Executive Director Moli Steinert spoke of the successful fight to preserve the agency and adult day health care itself in the face of dramatic proposed cuts in financing.

The evening ended with Dan presenting awards to staff members all of whom had been with the agency for twenty years or more. Receiving awards were:

- Amy Rong, Program Aide at Presentation Center, with SteppingStone for 20 years
- John Tinloy, former Social Worker, Program Director, Interim Executive Director with SteppingStone for 30 years
- Karen Ande, Physical Therapist at Presentation Center, with SteppingStone for 20 years
- Mei Chen, Activity Coordinator at Mabini Center, with SteppingStone for 27 years
- Nicole Clause, Program Director at Presentation, with SteppingStone for 22 years
- Rosanna Liu, Rehabilitation Aide at Mabini Center, with SteppingStone for 22 years
- Wil Tayo, Licensed Vocation Nurse at Mabini Center, with SteppingStone for 20 years
The evening ended with more laughter and reunions of old friends who had been through much together, taking an evening to reflect and enjoy each other.

Photos:
(Top left) Honorees Wil Tayo and Mei Chen at 40th Anniversary Celebration
(Middle 1) Olympic Club Venue before event
(Middle 2) Cocktails before dinner
(Middle 3) Honoree Karen Ande with Anna Wu, social worker at Presentation Center
(Middle 4) Board member Maelin Wang with former staff members Chit Lee Chong, Elizabeth Boardman and Elizabeth’s wife Barbara Tye
(Middle 5) Honoree Amy Rong and Urszula Munka, nurse at Presentation Center
(Middle 6) Honoree John Tinloy receiving award from SteppingStone Executive Director, Daniel Gallagher
(Middle 7) Honoree Mei Chen receiving award from SteppingStone Executive Director, Daniel Gallagher
(Middle 8) Honoree Nicole Clause receiving award from SteppingStone Executive Director, Daniel Gallagher
(Bottom) Awards given to honorees

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