



Contact:
Kim Winn
603-315-4426
Kimberly_Winn@HPHC.org

**HARVARD PILGRIM HEALTH CARE FOUNDATION HOSTS
ANNUAL COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARDS HONORING FOUR RECIPIENTS
FOR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY**

Nelson Rafael Roman, community advocate and Executive Director of Nueva Esperanza in Holyoke, reflects on own personal journey of community involvement

(Quincy, MA) May 2, 2018– The Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation honored four individuals and nonprofits for their volunteer contributions to their communities at the annual Community Spirit Awards held this morning in Quincy, Mass. Nelson Rafael Roman, Executive Director of Nueva Esperanza, a community development organization in Holyoke dedicated to meeting the needs of the Puerto Rican/Afro-Caribbean community, spoke about the importance and value of community volunteerism and activism.

“If you have gold, give gold back,” said Roman, “and gold doesn’t mean riches, it can mean whatever you have to give, but especially your time. Don’t be afraid to go into places you don’t know and ask ‘What can I do to help out?’, be bold, find your power, and give back. You can discover the richness of your community and of yourself.”

The four Community Spirit Award recipients are as follows, along with an excerpt from their nomination forms:

- **Community Spirit Volunteer: Stefany Mendez**, Procurement Category Lead, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care

“The passion and commitment demonstrated by Stefany for giving back to her community and fellow colleagues is commendable...she serves as a role model, mentor, educator, and leader. She has helped children learn about faith, she has mentored high school students seeking higher education. She serves her community to aid in health disparities at annual Latino health expos. She believes in creating opportunities for employees to influence decision making relative to business and employee development, and the entire Latino community.”

In honor of Stefany’s award, the Worcester Latino Scholars for Dollars will receive a \$250 grant. Stefany is a resident of Worcester.

- **Community Spirit Leader: Sam Potter**, Training Specialist, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute

“Sam joined Harvard Pilgrim’s employee group O.P.E.N. (Open. Proud. Engaged. Network) in search of finding a safer community so that he could openly be himself and have support during his transition. Through his engagement, Sam has not only created a space for himself, but now carries that momentum to make Harvard Pilgrim a safer space for others in the company whether they are transitioning, have a family member in need of support, or allies looking for answers to questions they didn’t feel safe asking.”

In honor of Sam’s award, The History Project will receive a \$250 grant. Sam is a resident of Jamaica Plain, Mass.

- **Community Spirit Team: The Women’s Development Group**, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care

“The HPHC Women’s Development Group supports, inspires and engages the community of women at Harvard Pilgrim. They consistently put on tremendous events that support HPHC’s core values and benefit employees. They go above and beyond with exploring topics that most people wouldn’t think about in the work place (Domestic Violence Month).”

In honor of the Women’s Development Group, Maura’s Hopeful Mission in Scituate, Mass., will receive a \$250 grant.

- **Community Spirit Hero: Rosie’s Place**, Boston, Mass.

“Rosie’s Place offers shelter for women and children and serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner 7 days a week to 200 people at each meal. Rosie’s Place is so successful because of their commitment to making a difference and the support they receive from the community. Rosie’s Place provides a safe and nurturing environment that helps low-income and homeless women maintain their dignity, seek opportunity, and find security in their lives.”

Rosie’s Place will receive a \$500 grant from the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation.

“It is always an honor to host the Community Spirit Awards presentation and celebrate those who are so passionate and dedicated to serving our community” said Janelle Woods-McNish, Director of Harvard Pilgrim Foundation’s Employee Service and Giving program. “These employees are nominated by their colleagues and they serve as an inspiration to us all.”

About The Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation

Created in 1980, The Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation supports Harvard Pilgrim’s mission to improve the quality and value of health care for the people and communities we serve. The Harvard Pilgrim Foundation provides the tools, training and leadership to help build healthy communities throughout Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. In 2017, the Harvard Pilgrim Foundation awarded more than \$2.3 million in grants to more than 900 nonprofit organizations in the region. Since its inception in 1980, the Foundation has awarded \$145 million in funds and resources throughout the four states. For more information, please visit www.harvardpilgrim.org/foundation and view our community spirit [video](#).

