



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Hope Through Caring Gala Honoring Matt Creen and Ed Rapp  
Raised Record-Breaking \$900,000 for the Les Turner ALS Foundation**

**Skokie, Ill., February 28, 2020** – The Les Turner ALS Foundation hosted its annual Hope Through Caring Gala on February 22, 2020, at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel in Chicago. Nearly 575 people filled the ballroom to honor Matt Creen and Ed Rapp and helped raise a record-breaking \$900,000. The gala featured an incredibly successful Fund a Need where guests contributed as much as \$10,000. Other event highlights included award presentations, a special video message from retired NFL player and ALS advocate Steve Gleason and dancing to music by The Chicago Players.

Event emcee Patrick Elwood of WGN-TV opened the evening's program followed by heartfelt remarks from Les Turner ALS Foundation's CEO Andrea Pauls Backman and board chair Ken Hoffman. Andrea and Ken spoke of the Foundation's commitment to a world free of ALS and to providing comprehensive care to those affected by ALS and their families.

"We fight each day for the 24 people living with ALS who are in the room with us tonight," said Ken Hoffman. "We fight each day for the hundreds of people and families living with ALS in the Chicagoland area and the thousands of people facing this disease around the world."

Andrea added to those affected by the disease, "You are the spirit of what we do, and every single decision we make and step forward we take is informed by you and because of you."

As the event continued, auctioneer Wade Leist led the crowd in an exciting live auction and paddle raise, which raised nearly \$400,000. Award presentations followed.

Dimitri Krainc, MD, PhD, Chair and Ward Professor in the Ken and Ruth Davee Department of Neurology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, presented Ed Rapp with the Bonny and Harvey Gaffen Advancements in ALS Award.

Dimitri praised Ed's approach to combating the disease, which promotes innovation and collaboration. After being diagnosed with ALS in 2015, Ed established Stay Strong vs. ALS, a nonprofit dedicated to raising awareness and securing funding to support those in search of a cure and bring better assistive technologies to those suffering with the disease. Additionally, Ed maintains a leadership role with Answer ALS, which is building the most comprehensive clinical, genetic, molecular and biochemical assessment of ALS while openly sharing the results with the global ALS community.

The evening also featured the Hope Through Caring Award presentation to Matt Creen, which was delivered via a video message by Steve Gleason. He praised Matt for his dedication to fundraising and inspiring the ALS community. Although ALS has robbed Matt of his ability to walk, speak and breathe on his own, each year Matt spearheads the planning of a popular golf outing, which has raised nearly \$450,000 for the Les Turner ALS Foundation.

Guests enjoyed the remainder of the evening, packing the dance floor and mingling with one another.

### **ABOUT THE AWARDS**

The Hope Through Caring Award honors those whose commitment to the fight against ALS has helped raise funds for research, provide services for patients and families and increase public awareness.

The Harvey and Bonny Gaffen Advancements in ALS Award recognizes either an individual significant advancement in ALS research and clinical care or a body of work dedicated to furthering ALS research, treatment or care.

### **ABOUT THE LES TURNER ALS FOUNDATION**

Founded in 1977, the Les Turner ALS Foundation is the leader in comprehensive ALS care in Chicagoland. Our individualized approach ensures each person living with the disease receives the best quality of care, and our local community of support provides their loved ones with answers and encouragement. Our Les Turner ALS Center at Northwestern Medicine is led by the most well-respected and successful clinicians and researchers in the field, advancing vital care and research in pursuit of life-enhancing treatments and a cure.

### **ABOUT AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS (ALS)**

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is a terminal progressive disease that causes muscle weakness, difficulty speaking and swallowing and, generally, complete paralysis. While some symptoms are treatable, there is no known prevention or cure for ALS.

To learn more about the Les Turner ALS Foundation, call 847-679-3311 or visit [www.lesturnerals.org](http://www.lesturnerals.org).

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