

OAC Honors Members with OAC Annual Awards at the 2016 *Your Weight Matters* National Convention

Each year, the OAC proudly recognizes the outstanding members, supporters and volunteers who go above and beyond in their efforts to support the OAC's mission of education, advocacy and support for individuals affected by obesity. During our 5th Annual *Your Weight Matters* National Convention in Washington, DC, the OAC presented a total of seven awards to deserving supporters of our organization.

These powerful individuals truly drive the successes of the OAC and lay the foundation for growth and change to happen. The OAC Annual Awards Ceremony is our opportunity to say "thank you" for making a direct impact on our goals – to give a voice to the individual affected by obesity and help others on their journey with weight and health.

OAC Member of the
Year Award

Nikki Massie



The 2016 OAC Member of the Year is Nikki Massie, a long-time OAC member who has worked tirelessly in her efforts to spread the message of our organization in her community and across the Nation. Nikki Massie has continually spread the word about the OAC on her blog "Bariatric Foodie," social media accounts and more, and assisted the OAC greatly with our promotional efforts for the 2016 *Your Weight Matters* National Convention.

Earlier this year, Nikki also hosted her own "Bariatric Foodie OAC Membership Drive" and "OAC Convention Sweepstakes" to grow the voice of the OAC through membership. Her drive recruited more than 235 new members to the coalition in just one month, and helped one lucky new OAC member experience our National Convention for the first time. As a blogger, health advocate and dedicated OAC member, Nikki understands just how important it is for individuals to have access to the right education, community and support for their journey. She is a truly deserving member who has stood out as a fighter, educator and champion and is always willing to put the OAC first.



Annual Awards

OAC Healthcare Provider Advocate of the Year Award

Deborah Horn, DO, MPH, FOMA



The 2016 Healthcare Provider Advocate of the Year is Deborah Horn, DO, MPH, FOMA. Dr. Horn is the Medical Director for the Center of Obesity Medicine and Metabolic Performance at the University of Texas Medical School in Houston, and serves as the President of the Obesity Medicine Association as well as a diplomat of the American Board of Obesity Medicine. Additionally, she is an ex-officio member of the OAC Board of Directors.

Dr. Horn is a tireless advocate for patients, the OAC, the cause of obesity and those affected by this disease. She has helped forge a strong partnership between the OAC and the Obesity Medicine Association and ensures that all OMA members are also members of the OAC. Additionally, Dr. Horn has openly expressed the value that healthcare providers can find in OAC educational materials when talking with patients about their weight and health. She continually advocates for the OAC on Capitol Hill, and supports each and every one of our efforts as our organization continues to grow. The OAC is proud to recognize Dr. Horn for her efforts on behalf of the 93 million Americans affected by obesity.

Chairman's Award

Michelle Vicari



This year's winner of the OAC Chairman's Award is Michelle Vicari. As the Secretary for the OAC National Board of Directors and Chair of the Convention Committee, she paves the way for our future successes on a daily basis. Michelle Vicari was elected to the Board of Directors in 2013 and has been a key voice in influencing change and growth from the very beginning.

As a blogger, influencer, change-maker and supporter of the OAC, Michelle devotes a vast majority of her time to advocating on our behalf. To the OAC staff, members of the organization, volunteers and her own social media followers, she is a voice for support, hope, positivity and courage. Her forward-thinking strategies for expanding the OAC and making a valuable difference in the lives of those living with obesity through education, advocacy and support is unparalleled, and we can attribute many of our accomplishments to her outstanding efforts.

Barbara Thompson Award for Advocacy



Ava Zebrick



The winner of the 2016 Barbara Thompson Award for Advocacy is Ava Zebrick. She is a determined and tireless advocate for the OAC who joined us this year on Capitol Hill to defend and support the passage of the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act. She also educated her very own state legislators on the importance of passing the National Obesity Care Week Congressional Resolution, and even served as a mock legislator at this year's *Your Weight Matters* National Convention advocacy training session.

Ava is an OAC member who has been involved with the organization since the 3rd Annual *Your Weight Matters* National Convention in Orlando, Fla, when she discovered the cause through a friend in a support group. Now, she has returned to her alma mater at the University of New Orleans to pursue a Master's degree in healthcare management. She also serves on the project management committee for a study on obesity at Pennington Biomedical Research Center and works as a patient engagement consultant for the Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI). It's clear to see that she has turned her passions into purpose and has become an incredible advocate for change!

Bias Buster of the Year Award



Reeger Cortell, FNP-C



The 2016 Bias Buster of the Year is Reeger Cortell, FNP-C, who has gone above and beyond in the fight to eradicate weight bias and to educate the population about weight bias's harmful effects. In 2015, she produced a video titled, "I have a disease -It's called obesity," which won first prize in the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery's "It Starts Now" video contest. After winning the contest, she donated all of the prize money to the OAC and continued her efforts to support our fight.

Reeger is also very renowned in the bariatric surgery community with her "Weight Loss Surgery Podcast" that tells the stories of obesity and bariatric surgery one episode at a time. She continually assists the OAC in combatting weight bias and has remained at the forefront of this battle for many years. The OAC is proud to honor Reeger Cortell with this award for all of her efforts.



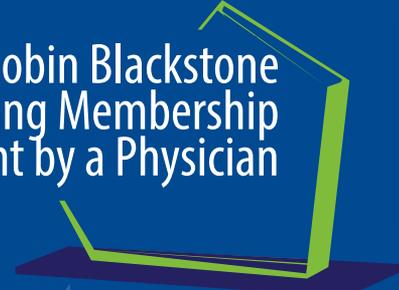
Community Leader of the Year Award

Natalie Heidrich, MS



The recipient of the 2016 Community Leader of the Year Award is Natalie Heidrich, MS, who has made an incredible difference in her community by promoting health and obesity awareness. Natalie actively engages and encourages the community to become involved in activities that support and further the mission of the OAC, and she works endlessly to advance obesity initiatives at the national, state and local level. Her impact in the work that she does every day is parallel to the OAC's mission of education, advocacy and support.

Natalie has been involved in Health Economics & Market Access for more than 12 years, fighting for the rights of coverage for bariatric patients. As a health policy manager for Ethicon, she has helped millions of individuals gain access to care and has been a role model for this cause and for the OAC since our inception in 2005.



Dr. Robin Blackstone Outstanding Membership Recruitment by a Physician

New Life Center for Bariatric Surgery



The winner of the 2016 Dr. Robin Blackstone Outstanding Membership Recruitment by a Physician award is the New Life Center for Bariatric Surgery, who has recruited the most new OAC members in the twelve months prior to the OAC's National Convention.

The New Life Center for Bariatric Surgery has been a long-time participant in the OAC Sponsored Membership Program and joined thousands of new members to the OAC to benefit from the education, advocacy and support offered to all individuals. We thank them for their continued support of our organization and are pleased to present them with the recruitment award.

The OAC congratulates all of the winners and thanks all of our members, supporters and volunteers for their nominations to the OAC Annual Awards. For more information on the OAC Annual Awards, please visit www.ObesityAction.org





ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



JOIN TODAY: GO TO OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN

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