

John M. Lloyd Foundation

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Thai AIDS Activists Receive \$100,000 Leadership Award

The John M. Lloyd AIDS Leadership Award Recognizes Visionary Activists

LOS ANGELES, MARCH 30, 2009 – The John M. Lloyd Foundation announced today that AIDS advocates Paisan Suwannawong and Karyn Kaplan of the Thai AIDS Treatment Action Group have been selected as the co-recipients of the \$100,000 annual John M. Lloyd AIDS Leadership Award.

Paisan Suwannawong, a native of Bangkok, has been living with HIV for 18 years. A former injecting drug user and graduate and former staff of Rebirth Drug Treatment Center in Ratchaburi, Thailand, Suwannawong is one of Thailand's leading harm reduction advocates. He is the co-founder of the Thai Drug Users' Network (TDN), founding chairman of the Thai Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (TNP+), and, with award co-recipient Karyn Kaplan, co-founder of the Thai AIDS Treatment Action Group (TTAG) which strives to build leadership and advocacy capacity among people living with or at high risk for HIV. Suwannawong serves as TTAG's executive director.

Karyn Kaplan, a native of New Jersey, has been involved with fighting the AIDS pandemic in the US and Thailand for over 20 years. In the US she worked with the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), and in Thailand she has campaigned for harm reduction and conducted drug policy advocacy with the Thai Drug Users' Network (TDN), including helping to secure a historic US \$1.3 million grant to drug user groups from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM) for the country's first peer-driven harm reduction project in 2003. Kaplan is the co-founder and Director of Policy and Development for the Thai AIDS Treatment Action Group (TTAG) in Bangkok.

"Their outspoken courageousness is undeniable and humbling for all of us," said Robert Estrin, President of the John M. Lloyd Foundation. "This award is given with the Foundation's admiration and respect for all that Paisan and Karyn have accomplished, and with the hope that it will help them to achieve even more success as leaders in the AIDS advocacy community."

"It is such a huge honor for us to receive this recognition, and you have no idea how much this means to our organization in terms of its sustainability," said Karyn Kaplan. Paisan Suwannawong added, "This is an honor not just for us, but for all of the activists working so hard in Thailand to fight AIDS and the discrimination around it."

Renowned AIDS Activists Commend Suwannawong and Kaplan

Leading AIDS experts applauded the selection of Suwannawong and Kaplan for the second annual John M. Lloyd AIDS Leadership Award.

Gregg Gonsalves, formerly of the AIDS and Rights Alliance of Southern Africa (ARASA) as well as Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) said, "Karyn and Paisan have done critical work in Southeast Asia to protect the rights of drug users and secure access to AIDS treatment for all

who need it under very difficult political circumstances.” Gonsalves was the first recipient of the John M. Lloyd AIDS Leadership Award in 2008.

Dr. Praphan Panuphak, director of Thai Red Cross and HIV Research Network, said, “Both of them are bold enough to give constructive criticism to the local authority and to the world which eventually leads to better respect and better care for marginalized, underserved population with HIV infection in Thailand.”

Jutatip Dechaboon, from the Health and Development Networks (HDN) and noted leader among activists living with HIV/AIDS in Thailand, said, “It is incredible that Paisan and Karyn, who have led a very long walk on the HIV and AIDS road, have been awarded the John M. Lloyd AIDS Leadership Award. Their passion and intention on helping their friends allowed them to get the reward.”

Shiba Phurailatpam, the Director of the Asia Pacific Network of PLWHA (APN+), said, “Ott and Karyn have been fantastic, they are fun to work with. Their commitment, determination and enthusiasm have been a constant source of inspiration for many people who have worked with them on drug use and HIV/AIDS.”

Paul Cawthorne, Director, Access to Essential Treatments Campaign, Asia for Médecins Sans Frontières-Belgium/Thailand, said, “I am so pleased to hear that Paisan and Karyn are to receive the 2009 John M. Lloyd AIDS Leadership Award. I can think of few others that deserve such an award for the years of dedication they have given to the cause of improving access to treatment and care for people living with HIV and in particular those from the drug using community who have faced such enormous difficulties in gaining access to the treatment and care that should be theirs by right.”

The John M. Lloyd AIDS Leadership Award was established to recognize, support and empower effective leaders in AIDS advocacy who have not yet been extensively recognized. There is no application process for the award – the selection is made by the board of the John M. Lloyd Foundation. The \$100,000 award will be split among Paisan Suwannawong, Karyn Kaplan and the Thai AIDS Treatment Action Group as an unrestricted gift to help build leadership capacity.

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The John M. Lloyd Foundation was established in 1991 by John Musser Lloyd (1948-1991) to seek creative, compassionate, and courageous solutions to the root causes of the AIDS epidemic. Each year, the foundation awards approximately \$400,000 in mostly small grants to achieve the following objectives:

- Increase funding from public and private sectors to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in the U.S. and globally
- Improve U.S. and international AIDS policies
- Amplify global awareness of HIV/AIDS and facilitate broad-based changes in attitudes, to reduce stigma and change behavior
- Develop the leadership of organizations fighting HIV/AIDS, and foster collaborations among those organizations and leaders.

The Lloyd Foundation received top ranking for its support of marginalized communities in a survey earlier this month that analyzed more than 800 foundations which was conducted by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy for its report, *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best: Benchmarks to Assess and Enhance Grantmaker Impact*.

For more information, see www.johnmlloyd.org.