

Heart N Hands' 10th Anniversary Gala Celebrates Accomplishments in Heart Health with 'Love Your Heart Champion Awards'

The Love Your Heart Champion Awards were presented for Excellence in Exercise, Heart Smart for Nutrition, Wellness Warrior, and the Heart of a Champion.

NEW ORLEANS, LA, UNITED STATES, November 5, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Heart N Hands'](#) 10th Anniversary "Love Your Heart" Gala & Auction, held on Saturday, September 21, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in New Orleans, was a night of celebration and inspiration. The event celebrated ten years of empowering young girls to lead heart-healthy lives and acknowledged the incredible support the organization has received from its volunteers, sponsors, and partners.



"Our 10th Anniversary GALA was a great success! I'm so grateful to all who attended, our sponsors, those who donated silent auction items, our GALA committee, and our many volunteers!," said Essence Harris Banks, the CEO and founder of Heart N Hands. "Our mission is stronger than ever, as we work to combat heart disease, the No. 1 killer of women."

The "Love Your Heart" GALA included a VIP Pre-Gala Reception with exclusive access to VIP perks. The vibrant evening featured local entertainment by New Orleans songbird Robin Barnes and DJ Rakimbeau. There was also gourmet New Orleans fare and an exciting silent and live auction, with live bidding by auctioneer Chuck Mutz, Black Tie Auctions. Proceeds from the gala will support Heart N Hands' "Love Your Heart" Wellness Programs and Scholarship Fund. This funding is crucial for continuing Heart N Hands' mission to educate and empower girls about heart health and disease prevention.

Heart N Hands has educated over 7,500 girls and their families in its "Love Your Heart" Wellness

Program in the past decade. "We need help to continue our mission," said Banks. "We want to continue empowering, raising awareness, and educating girls about heart health and disease prevention by promoting physical activity, healthy eating, and overall heart-healthy lifestyle choices."

Heart N Hands' Junior Board Members Joi Scott, Judaea DoQui, Evangeline Wendt, Eloise Schild, and Evan Moller were recognized for their hard work and enthusiastic spirit. The highlight of

the evening was the Love Your Heart Champion Awards presented for Excellence in Exercise, Heart Smart for Nutrition, Wellness Warrior, and Heart of a Champion.



Heart N Hands' Junior Board Member, Judaea DoQui.

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Energetic entertainer, businessman, personal trainer, and motivational speaker LaDonte Lotts won the Excellence in Exercise Award. He aims to inspire people to achieve a better quality of life, care for their bodies, and maintain a positive attitude. The owner of JiggAerobics, a dance-based fitness program, LaDonte uses his body as a tool of expression and wants to spread his positive energy to others.

The Heart Smart for Nutrition Award was presented to Molly Kimball, RD, CSSD, a registered dietitian with Ochsner Health. Molly founded [Ochsner Eat Fit](#), a program to help consumers make healthy dining-out decisions. She

received her doctoral degree from Louisiana State University. She is board-certified by the Commission on Dietetic Registration.

Coretta LaGarde, MPA, the Executive Director at the [American Heart Association](#), won the Wellness Warrior Award. She is responsible for driving the strategy and execution of corporate revenue, communications, and health impact goals for the Greater New Orleans market, advancing health equity. With 18 years of experience in nonprofit and corporate engagement, 11 of which have been with the American Heart Association, Coretta's people-management journey is paired with performance leadership at the Regional and National levels.

Heart of a Champion was presented to Janeé Michelle', "Gee Tucker." As Gee Tucker, she made

her mark in the business world, co-founding and building Tucker & Associates into a powerhouse consulting firm. She was pivotal in forming partnerships with the New Orleans Recreation Department and the New Orleans Ballet Association, providing inner-city youth access to professional dance programs. As Janee' Michelle, Gee began her acting career in Hollywood, where she starred and co-starred in multiple television, stage productions, and commercials.

The former queen of the New Orleans Mardi Gras Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club, Gee missed the organization's activities this year due to what she thought was minor indigestion and fatigue. The results of her EKG and medical tests revealed she had suffered a major heart attack with 99 percent blockages in three of her four heart chambers.

After undergoing triple bypass open heart surgery, she recovered quickly. A testament to resilience, she walked around the hospital, inspiring everyone, including her family, especially her daughter, daughter-in-law, and granddaughters, with her remarkable story the day after her surgery.

To donate or get involved with Heart N Hands, visit www.heartnhands.org for more information.

About Heart N Hands

Founded in 2014, Heart N Hands is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness about heart health



Heart N Hands' Junior Board Member, Evangeline Wendt.



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and preventing heart disease among young girls aged 10-18. Over the past decade, the organization has educated over 7,500 girls, trained more than 500 in Hands-Only CPR, and expanded its programs nationally.

Essence Harris Banks

Heart N Hands

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