



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact: Kathi M. Petersen
Communications Manager
Kathi.Petersen@MAHEC.net
828-257-4445

MAHEC Commemorates the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Awards presented to staff who exemplify Dr. King's spirit

(Asheville, North Carolina – January 13, 2023) MAHEC commemorated the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the organization's annual Spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr. Award Celebration on January 12, 2023. The much-anticipated centerpiece of the event was the announcement of winners of the coveted Spirit of MLK Award, the Emerging Leader Award, and a special Lifetime Achievement Award. The following are this year's award-winners:

Spirit of MLK Award: Eduardo Fabian Moreno, MS, LCMHC

*Bilingual Mental Health Professional
Center for Psychiatry and Mental Wellness*



Eduardo Fabian Moreno was selected as this year's employee who most exemplifies Dr. King's spirit. A first generation Mexican-American on one side and a Western North Carolinian on the other, Moreno works with both English and Spanish speaking children, families, and adults dealing anxiety, depression, and trauma- and stress-related disorders.

According to Moreno's nominator, "Eduardo speaks up (in the most kind, gentle and affirming way) for so many historically excluded identities...advocating for people from different racial and ethnic groups, gender identities, neurodiverse people, and differently-abled people. It is refreshing and inspiring to witness Eduardo's commitment to improve service delivery to ALL at MAHEC."

Emerging Leader Award: Elisabeth Wallace, MSIS

Health Sciences Education Librarian



The Emerging Leader Award recognizes rising stars who serve as instruments of change at MAHEC and in the community. This year's changemaker is Research Librarian Elisabeth Wallace, who according to her nominator, "demonstrates her commitment to DEI work at MAHEC in clear and, often, quiet ways. She shows up and supports various efforts; for example, the annual MLK celebration, DEI training of residents and MAHEC employees, sharing of articles and learning opportunities with the DEI committee and other stakeholders, supporting NCAHEC Community Health Workers program as librarian – helping to ensure this work is grounded in emerging best practice and evidence.

"She also speaks up in ways that influence others to learn and to change. She continues to grow and learn and sets an example for others in how she participates and contributes."

(MORE)

Mountain Area Health Education Center

121 Hendersonville Road • Asheville, NC 28803 • Phone (828) 257-4400 • www.mahec.net

Lifetime Achievement Award: Bill Gist, MD (posthumously)

Dr. Bill Gist, the MAHEC Ob/Gyn Residency Program Director until his passing in September 2022, was remembered and celebrated with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication and commitment to creating an equitable and inclusive place to work, learn, and receive care.

The award acknowledged the dedication and commitment to health equity, diversity, engagement, and inclusion Dr. Gist selflessly provided to patients, residents, faculty, staff, our community, and others.

Three dozen MAHEC leaders nominated

In total, three dozen leaders from across MAHEC who are carrying on the spirit of Dr. King in their daily lives and work were nominated by their colleagues for these awards this year

- **Spirit of MLK Nominees:** Bill Gist (posthumously) | Cassidy Quillen | Cindy McMillan | Drea Mora | Eduardo Fabian Moreno | Francisco Castelblanco | Jeffrey LaSalle | Karen Yasmeen Gamboa | Keir Wilcox | Kevin Mahoney | Lisa Maldonado | Michelle Boose | Rathika Nimalendran | Robyn Latessa | Stephanie Stewart | Sylvia Kaufman | Tommasanne Davis
- **Emerging Leader Nominees:** Ashley Steward | Betty Cobbs | Brandy Tiernan | Cassidy Quillen | Drea Mora | Dylan Ysaguirre | Eduardo Fabian Moreno | Elisabeth Wallace | Jeffrey LaSalle | Jessica Poston | Karen Yasmeen Gamboa | Kim Palmer | Matt Ransom | Michelle Howard | Monica Gonzalez | Rathika Nimalendran | Steve Konkle | Tessa Frank | Tiangela "Ti" Austin

###

About MAHEC

Established nearly five decades ago, MAHEC – Mountain Area Health Education Center – is a leader in healthcare, education, and innovation. Headquartered in Asheville with satellite offices in [various locations](#) across its 16-county Western North Carolina service area, MAHEC is the largest of nine [Area Health Education Centers](#) in North Carolina. With more than 1,000 employees, MAHEC's mission is to recruit, train and retain the workforce needed to create a healthy North Carolina, with a focus on primary care in rural communities and those with less access to resources.

MAHEC's 14-acre Biltmore campus is also home to [UNC Health Sciences at MAHEC](#), an academic health center in partnership with UNC-Chapel Hill that includes programs from the UNC School of Medicine, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy, and UNC Adams School of Dentistry. A private, [501\(c\)3 nonprofit organization](#), MAHEC will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2024. For more information, visit [mahec.net](#) and follow MAHEC on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).