

CEO Hallman honors five "crucial" partners at Golf Classic

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Easterseals Serving Chicagoland and Greater Rockford awarded five Partner Awards at its Annual Golf Classic.

When our CEO Sara Ray Hallman arrived in 2019, Easterseals Serving Chicagoland and Greater Rockford was in a period of significant challenge. The past 3 years have been ones of transformation—financially and organizationally. That happened because of leadership, staff, a lot of hard work, and crucial partners.

Hallman says, "All non-profits go through challenging times and we were no exception. There were moments that were downright scary. And yet, there were many miracles that we experienced along the way and tremendous challenges that were tackled and resolved. New doors were opened. We climbed from a place of significant vulnerability to a place where we are on the path to reaching enduring sustainability."

She adds, "Despite the fact that all organizations go through such challenging times, institutional memory on those difficulties are often lost; it is often because aspects of those memories are unpleasant, we do not want to remember. And yet, it is critical that we do: both so we do not return to those times again and so we take the time to be grateful for our path to a new future. But we did not do it alone. We had incredible partners who made this possible. There were five partners who were absolutely critical in our ability to survive and thrive in our moment of challenge."

In honor of those partners, Easterseals Serving Chicagoland and Greater Rockford awarded five Partner Awards at its Annual Golf Classic to Huntington Bank; Boston Consulting Group; Patina Solutions; CCB Technology; and Katelyn Silva/Silva Content Solutions & Julie Bosso/Team Bosso Communications.

See below the comments that our CEO made about each partner at the VIP Corporate Sponsor Reception.

#1 Partner Award for Sustainability: HUNTINGTON BANK

"We want to give this award to a special team at Huntington Bank, the Financial Recovery Group and one particular member of that group who worked closely with us: Lucian Lupascu.

Lucian is absolutely extraordinary. He is deeply knowledgeable and competent. He is incredibly responsive, at any time of the day or night, weekday or weekend, whether he is in or out of the office. He comes to every conversation and discussion prepared. He spent countless hours working with and for us, and while he was always clear that his role was to represent and work on behalf of Huntington Bank, it was equally clear that he valued the Easterseals organization and mission and wanted us to succeed...

Perhaps the best indicator of how much we have valued working with Lucian was that when we learned that our organizational status had been upgraded by Huntington, our first response was to be (of course) ecstatic; but a few minutes later, we expressed to one another how much we will miss working with Lucian. Over those months, working so closely and talking weekly, Lucian was our closest collaborator and partner. We'll never forget his contributions to the progress we made, and I truly believe we could not have done what we have done without him."



#2 Partner Award for Strategy: THE BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP (BCG)

“In a period of organizational transformation and crisis, it is easy to get scattered or overwhelmed; it's easy to get subsumed in the day to day and lose sight of the long term. many organizations in crisis do not make it because leaders scatter their energies across too many priorities, instead of triaging and putting talents and time into the highest priority items.

In that critical moment, BCG agreed to do a pro-bono strategic planning engagement. During those critical early days, a team of 10 BCG staff worked with us for 10 weeks. They assessed the competitive landscape around our anchor programs. They examined our brand, analyzed our funding models, advised on strategic direction and low-hanging fruit, designed early stage operational and programmatic metrics, and also continued to take my calls, emails and texts to advise on pressing

challenges.

To Marin Gjaja, Amanda Brimmer, Colleen Desmond, Ryan Curley, Emily Kos, Brian Tower, Claire Schmidt, Matthew DePorre, Costas Christ and all of those who supported us from BCG—Thank you.”



#3 Partner Award for Talent: PATINA SOLUTIONS

"The transformation required at Easterseals in the operational and financial realm required specialized talent and expertise to guide the path. Our success and survival as an organization required identifying and recruiting the absolute best talent to diagnose the challenges, particularly in the financial realm. At the same time, we needed to find leaders who had a passion for our work and the ability to work closely with our amazing program leaders.

Monte Weirman at Patina Solutions did just this. Monte sat down with me and key board members and heard our needs. He identified talent. He brought us both Sarah Boburka and Lucinda Coffman, whom I recognize as two of the most important leaders that transformed our organization Monte did even more than that. He even rolled up his own sleeves, dug in and worked on that first audit with us. He advised me directly on many other aspects of our operational transformation. Thank you, Monte."



#4 Partner Award for Infrastructure: CCB TECHNOLOGY

"CCB was already our technology partner when I came on board. In my first six weeks, the CCB team sat me down and presented me with a deck of all of the pressing technology needs. I responded by telling them: 'Guys, we are not ready. We have financial issues that need to be addressed. But when we are, you will be the first to know.' ' And CCB said, 'When you are ready, we will be here.'

And they were.

As soon as we had cash available, we began to invest in CCB's plan to improve our IT function and security. They replaced servers. They constructed firewalls. They built backups. They created redundancy. When we asked if they could do more—come and be our virtual CIO and chart a path to the future for technology—they answered the call.

I cannot thank you enough, Logan McCoy, for taking that virtual CIO role. You have worked closely with our people. You have listened to us. Your team has transformed and continues to transform our technology environment. And I can't say enough good things about the WAY you have done this: with a kindness, empathy, listening, support and humor that is an inspiration. You also stuck with us when we were so behind in paying our bills early on. You had faith we would find a path and you helped us define that path. For all of this we are forever grateful."



#5 Partner Award for Brand: SILVA CONTENT SOLUTIONS and TEAM BOSSO COMMUNICATIONS

"For Brand, we present this award to our amazing communications contractors, Katelyn Silva from Silva Content Solutions and Julie Bosso from Team Bosso Communications.

Katelyn, you were the first person I called when I was named President & CEO of Easterseals. I called and told you that we had no one on staff who could write my CEO appointment announcement and I needed your help. I told you that our social media had not been touched in almost two years, and would you help me bring it back to life.

Julie, we had a phone call within the first few weeks after I arrived. You told me about your amazing work supporting programs in design and marketing. You shared with me your dream of strengthening the Easterseals brand.

Over the past three years, Katelyn and Julie have been the face, voice, written word, and expert design behind the entire Easterseals identity. You both have an oversized impact on our work. I often forget you are not working for us full time given all you contribute and do.

You have built an incredible foundation for Easterseals brand, identity and presence. You have done this with almost no resources—with an expertise and passion that is unmatched."

