

## THE 2021 MIDGE KOVACS ANNUAL AWARENESS AWARD

Since 1999, the NSDA takes great pleasure in bestowing the **Midge Kovacs Annual Awareness Award**. Midge started one of the first SD support groups. She wrote a newsletter in order to share information about SD as well as experiences of people living with SD. She encouraged all of us with SD to think beyond our individual voice problems. "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." (Margaret Mead)

In presenting the Midge Kovacs Annual Awareness Award, we honor the outstanding work of an SD support group. This presentation marks our 23<sup>rd</sup> consecutive presentation. For their work in 2020 and several years prior to that, this award this year is given to **Debbie States** and **Ilene Cooper** and the **Atlanta SD Support Group**. Truly, this dynamic group follows in the footsteps of the late pioneering SD advocate, **Midge Kovacs**.

Past Leader, **Debbie States**, kept members updated with announcement mailings with the assistance of Co-Leader, **Ilene Cooper**. When Debbie recently moved out of the area, **Cindi McCullough** agreed to serve as Co-Leader with Ilene. **Laura Rahuba** is a Member of the Atlanta group and she has served as Social Media Ambassador for the NSDA. In addition, Laura has attended Dystonia Advocacy Day. Her artwork was selected as the winner in our publication, "Celebrating Our Voice". For World Voice Day 2019, NSDA President, **Charlie Reavis**, Co-Leader, **Debbie States**, and members of the Atlanta group received the Mayoral Proclamation. In December, 2019, when "Cookie" had a private screening in Atlanta, NSDA President, **Charlie Reavis**, Co-Leaders, **Debbie States** and **Ilene Cooper**, Social Media Ambassador, **Laura Rahuba**, and other members of the group were there.

Laura was a member of the Planning Committee of our 2020 Walk for Talk and she posted a video of herself during it. Co-Leader, **Debbie States**, also shared a video of herself during our Walk for Talk event. **Sue Payne** is also a Member of the Atlanta Group. In our 2020 Walk for Talk, Sue posted inspiring videos and served on a Facebook fundraisers group which gave encouragement to other fundraisers for this event. Sue was one of the top individual fundraisers for our 2020 Walk for Talk by raising over \$ 3,000. The Atlanta group was the top fundraising team of our 2020 Walk for Talk by raising nearly \$ 10,000.

"Great things are brought about and burdens are lightened through the efforts of many hands anxiously engaged in a good cause." (**Elder M. Russell Ballard**) The NSDA is grateful for the experience, dedication and commitment to serve the spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions community shown by the members and leaders of the Atlanta SD Support Group.