



THE 2023 MIDGE KOVACS ANNUAL AWARENESS AWARD

Greater Los Angeles Dysphonia Support Group Toni Gold

*In honor of her dedication in support group leadership
and fundraising for Dysphonia International*

Since 1999, the National Spasmodic Dysphonia Association, now Dysphonia International, takes great pleasure in bestowing the **Midge Kovacs Annual Awareness Award**. Midge started one of the first SD support groups. She wrote a newsletter to share information about SD and the 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 a Dysphonia Support Group. This presentation marks our 25th consecutive presentation. For her work in 2022 and years prior, this year's award is given to **Toni Gold** and the **Greater Los Angeles Dysphonia Support Group**. Truly, this dynamic group follows in the footsteps of the late pioneering SD advocate, **Midge Kovacs**. This is the first award under the organization's new name.

In the 2018 4th quarter issue of *Voices of Support* newsletter, we selected Toni Gold as an SD Champion. Toni has developed relationships with healthcare professionals and SD patients alike. In 2018, she helped to organize an Educational Seminar on SD with **Dr. Michael Johns** and his USC colleagues. She continues to host interesting virtual meetings. Toni led a Walk for Talk event in 2020, 2021, and 2022. In addition, she was able to have articles placed in the media about her dysphonia journey, which raised further awareness about spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions. An article about Toni published last year states that she has had spasmodic dysphonia for 50 years and that she does not let it define her. She shares her story in order to comfort others with the same disorder.

Dysphonia International is grateful for the experience, dedication and commitment shown by Leader, **Toni Gold** of the **Greater Los Angeles Dysphonia Support Group**. She exemplifies these words: "You have the power to motivate and inspire. Let your enthusiasm shine." (**Author, JD Crighton**)



Prior to my involvement with Dysphonia International I felt no one understood the impact the loss of my voice had on my well-being. In addition to feeling sad, angry, and frustrated, my self-esteem diminished. It was only through my involvement in initiating the Los Angeles support group and organizing three successful Walk For Talk fundraising campaigns that I found my true "voice." By raising awareness of this devastating condition, I realized my breaking voice not only didn't matter but could actually be a strength as I reached out to support others in need. As the 2023 recipient of the Midge Kovacs Award, I feel both humbled and honored. I will always strive to uphold the values that this award represents and do my utmost to promote the mission of Dysphonia International.

Toni Gold