

Living one's purpose through service

By Yolanda Walsh

Currently celebrating its fifth year, the Jeannine Rivet National Leadership Award enhances community health and healthcare delivery by supporting emerging nurse leaders who integrate their health expertise with new civic and professional opportunities. The 2023 recipient of the Rivet Award, made possible through the generous contributions of the United Health Foundation in partnership with the American Nurses Foundation, demonstrates a passion for and commitment to the profession of nursing through her dedication to the professional and civic communities in which she serves.

Alita-Geri Carter, MSN, RN, CPNP-PC, is a nurse practitioner and a public health analyst for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Beyond her role at HRSA, Carter founded and serves as CEO of The Commission for Health, which empowers providers and community members to reach their highest potential as stakeholders in the healthcare system. The Commission for Health accomplishes this aim through services such as training, public speaking, business, public relations, and communications. More recently, Carter set her sights on supporting young people by establishing On The Move. This non-profit promotes literacy and provides leadership development, career exposure, and planning to future healthcare professionals in middle and high school.

As exemplified by her career and community activities, Carter leans into the notion that once we find our purpose in life, we must strive to live that purpose through serving others. Her own life experiences have inspired her work. "From my earliest memories, I wanted to see the people who lived in underserved communities who struggled and fought for fundamental human rights ... live to see their children benefit from their struggles," she recalled. Carter experienced poverty as a child and lived in an unsafe neighborhood. "Now," she added, "I'm fighting for families living in that same situation or worse, and

for healthcare access and equity, diversity, educational equity, inclusion, and accessibility in healthcare and educational opportunities."

Carter also noted the influence of mentors and supporters in her professional and personal development and in shaping her ideas and actions about community service. "I've received many intangible gifts from those willing to give a hand up by utilizing their talents and time to push me forward," she said.

"The Rivet Award will support my efforts in continuing the cycle of being the change I want to see, paying it forward, and creating opportunities for future leaders in the pipeline behind me."

Jeannine Rivet, RN, MPH, FAAN, also acknowledged the significance of living her personal and professional purpose through service. Her recent decision to endow this prestigious award marks a pivotal step in ensuring funds remain available for the leadership development of our nation's nurses.

"I was surprised and honored when UnitedHealth Group coordinated 5 years ago with the American Nurses Foundation to create a 10-year Jeannine Rivet Leadership Award," she said. "Having the privilege of being on the selection committee, I've reviewed talented, up and coming nursing professionals and met with all the award recipients. Seeing the impact of these awards and the dedication by and development of these wonderful nurses, I've decided to endow the Jeannine Rivet National Leadership Award to continue well into the future—to support the next generations of nursing leaders."

The American Nurses Foundation thanks Rivet for her generous contribution and is honored to partner with the United Health Foundation in presenting this year's Jeannine Rivet National Leadership Award. Both organizations are pleased to support Carter as she continues

her dedicated work on behalf of individual patients and community health.

—Yolanda Walsh is the program and events administrator at the American Nurses Foundation.



Alita-Geri Carter



Jeannine Rivet