

Invisible Disabilities Association honors its champions

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Joanne Davidson

In addition, actors **Marlo Thomas** and **Kevin Sorbo**; **Kimberly McCleary**, president/CEO of the [Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome Association of America](#); **Jennifer Brusstar**, president/CEO of the [Tug McGraw Foundation](#); and **Laura Hillenbrand**, author of the New York Times bestseller “Seabiscuit,” and “Unbroken,” were recognized for their contributions.

“There is a tremendous need to raise awareness about diseases and chronic conditions that have significant impacts on people’s lives, but are not physically apparent,” notes IDA’s founder and president, **Wayne Connell**.

“Even people close to you may not understand what you are going through if you have a debilitating condition because on the outside, you look the same.”

The IDA’s mission, Connell adds, “Revolves around care. We care by listening, believing, validating, encouraging, educating and connecting people touched by illness and pain, even when they can barely get out of bed, even when they can’t speak for themselves, and even when they must depend on others for their most basic needs.”

The dinner held at the Denver Marriott South in Lone Tree was emceed by CBS4 weather anchor **Ed Greene**; attorney **Jack Fitzgibbons** and his wife, **Adrienne Ruston Fitzgibbons**, were the honorary chairmen.

Illusionists **David** and **Teesha Laflin** provided the entertainment.

Liniger received the Corporate Honors Award for creating what Connell described as “creating a corporate culture of giving back to the community.” McDonald-Galbreath, who started SaddleUp! and serves as its president, was given the Volunteer Honors Award in recognition of her lifelong passion for volunteering on behalf of those living with illness and disability.

The Research Honors Award went to Kelley for his role in creating CereScan, which provides cutting-edge research in brain diagnostics. Myhill, recipient of the Founders Honors Award, started TrafficJam to help bring an end to human



The founder of the Invisible Disabilities Association, Wayne Connell, left, and his wife, Sherri, with the awards gala honorary chairmen Adrienne and Jack Fitzgibbons. (Steve Peterson, Special to The Denver Post)



Jim Galbreath and his wife, Shery McDonald-Galbreath, founder of the SaddleUp! Foundation. (Steve Peterson, Special to The Denver Post)

trafficking.

Marlo Thomas, national outreach director for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, was given the Healthcare Honors Award while Kevin Sorbo, actor, producer, director and author of "True Strength," was the recipient of the Inspiration Honors Award. Both accepted via videotaped message.

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Illusionist David Laflin entertains at IDA's annual banquet. (Steve Peterson, Special to The Denver Post)