



## **“THE GOOD DOCTOR,” “NEW AMSTERDAM,” “NCIS: NEW ORLEANS,” “THE PEANUT BUTTER FALCON” AND ACTOR NYLE DIMARCO ANNOUNCED AS HONOREES FOR ANNUAL MEDIA ACCESS AWARDS**

*Hosted by actor Joe Mantegna (“Criminal Minds”) and actor, producer and writer Shoshannah Stern (“This Close”), the awards celebrate and honor representation of the disability community in Hollywood*

**LOS ANGELES – November 5, 2019** – Today, the [Media Access Awards](#), in partnership with nonprofit disability services provider [Easterseals](#), announced the honorees of the 40<sup>th</sup> annual Media Access Awards. Taking place Nov. 14, 2019 at The Beverly Hilton, the awards celebrate individuals and content that have redefined on-screen representation for the disability community, while advancing the portrayal and employment of people with disabilities in Hollywood.

“Changing the way people view disabilities begins with shifting the culture around the on-screen representation of this minority group and continues by opening doors to opportunities to ensure inclusivity,” said Deborah Calla and Allen Rucker, Co-CEOs of the Media Access Awards. “The honorees of this year’s awards are driving today’s representation, spreading inclusion and diversity, and paving the road for the future.”

**Joe Mantegna**, longtime disability advocate for Easterseals and star of “Criminal Minds” will join actor, writer and producer of “This Close,” and former Media Access Awards winner, **Shoshannah Stern** to host the awards. The night’s honorees are selected by the diversity committees of their professional guilds with awards from the Casting Society of America (**CSA**), Producers Guild of America (**PGA**), Screen Actors Guild (**SAG-AFTRA**) and Writers Guild of America (**WGA**). This year’s award honorees include:

- **PGA George Sunga Award: Albert Berger, Christopher Lemole, Lije Sarki, David Thies, Ron Yerxa, and Tim Zajaros**, producers of “The Peanut Butter Falcon”
- **SAG-AFTRA Disability Awareness Award: Jay Ruderman of the Ruderman Foundation**
- **SAG-AFTRA Harold Russell Award: Nyle DiMarco**, advocate, producer, model and actor (“Station 19,” “Dancing with the Stars” and “America’s Next Top Model”)
- **WGA West Evan Somers Memorial Award: Katherine Beattie**, writer of “NCIS: New Orleans”
- **Casting Society of America Award: David Caparelliotis and Lauren Port**, casting directors of “New Amsterdam”
- **Visionary Award: Erin Gunn, Mark Rozeman, David Renaud, and David Shore**, writers and producers of “The Good Doctor”
- **Christopher Reeve Acting Scholarship: Lauren “Lolo” Spencer**, actress, “Give Me Liberty”

“We congratulate this year’s outstanding honorees – each working to diversify modern storytelling and shine a light on many talented artists with disabilities,” said Mark Whitley, CEO of Easterseals Southern California. “As an organization committed to advancing greater inclusion and disability representation across entertainment, we know what a pivotal role the honorees play in helping change people’s perceptions about disability, challenging stigmas and showing what true inclusion means.”

The presenters for the annual awards include actors **Camryn Manheim** (“Stumptown,” “Person of Interest,” “The Practice”), **CJ Jones** (“Avatar 2,” “Baby Driver”), **Coby Bird** (“The Good Doctor”), **Zack Gottsagen** and **John Hawkes** (“The Peanut Butter Falcon”), **Daryl ‘Chill’ Mitchell** and **Kurt Yaeger** (“NCIS: New Orleans”), and **Timothy Omundson** (“This is Us”), in addition to **David Schulner** and **Peter Horton**, writer/producer and executive producer/actor (“New Amsterdam”).

Founded in the 1970’s by Norman Lear, Fern Field, and Norman G. Brooks, the 2019 awards are a landmark celebration as Media Access Awards celebrates 40 years and Easterseals celebrates 100 years of disability services. The awards will open with a skit by founder **Norman Lear**, joined by **Jimmy Kimmel**. **Mandy Harvey**, singer and former contestant on America’s Got Talent will perform, joined by keyboardist Alfred Sheppard.

The 40<sup>th</sup> annual Media Access Awards in partnership with Easterseals are sponsored by platinum sponsors CBS Corporation, David & Molly Pyott Foundation, Walt Disney Television Creative Talent & Development and Kevin Bright. Gold sponsors include the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, Bunim/Murray Productions, Comcast NBC Universal, The Hollywood Reporter and Sony Pictures Entertainment, with silver sponsors Starz and RespectAbility. Friends and partners of the 40<sup>th</sup> annual Media Access Awards include the Casting Society of America, SAG-AFTRA, Producers Guild of America, Writers Guild of America West and Gold Pictures.

For more information about the Media Access Awards, please visit [mediaaccessawards.com](http://mediaaccessawards.com) or follow the conversation on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#). The Media Access Awards will stream live on Thursday, November 14, 2019, with the cocktail reception and red carpet beginning at 6 p.m.

#### **About the Media Access Awards**

As the largest minority group on the planet—and as the only minority group that anyone can join at any point of his or her life—the disability community is a robust, diverse, and integral part of our global fabric. The Media Access Awards celebrate this fact by honoring, highlighting, and promoting disability and its depictions in film, television, and new media. The Media Access Awards aim to recognize depictions of disability that are accurate, inclusive, and multi-faceted. Our awards ceremony honors those industry professionals who have advanced disability-related narrative in fields including writing, producing, casting, performance, and directing. We are proud and pleased to be at the forefront of creating and promoting opportunities for some of the brightest talents in the industry. [www.mediaaccessawards.com](http://www.mediaaccessawards.com)

#### **About Easterseals Southern California**

For 100 years, Easterseals has been an indispensable resource for individuals with developmental disabilities or other special needs and their families. The services provided by Easterseals Southern California (ESSC) – in Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Imperial, Kern, San Bernardino, Riverside and Ventura counties – make profound and positive differences in people's lives every day, helping them address life’s challenges and achieve personal goals so that they can live, learn, work and play in our communities. With 2,800+ employees, 60+ service sites and hundreds of community partnership locations, ESSC assists more than 13,000 people, providing adult/senior day services; autism therapy; child development/early education; employment services, veteran employment support; independent living options; and more. At Easterseals, 88% of our income is spent on services. Join us in changing the way the world defines and views disabilities at [www.easterseals.com/southernca](http://www.easterseals.com/southernca) and [www.WeCelebrate.org](http://www.WeCelebrate.org).

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