

Michelle Visage Among HIV Advocates Honored at GMHC's 2024 Gala

RuPaul made a surprise speech at the NYC gala honoring leaders fighting stigma.

October 24, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

You better work...to fight HIV in order to take the stage at GMHC's 2024 Gala. This year's fundraising awards event, themed "For All, End Stigma," honored health care and community leaders who combat stigma and contribute to [HIV](#) and [AIDS](#) research, [according to GMHC](#).

TV and radio personality Michelle Visage—best known as a judge on RuPaul's Drag Race—was presented with the Community Advocate Award by her longtime friend and pop culture icon RuPaul at the September 30 gala, held at Tribeca Rooftop in New York City. Throughout her decades-long career, Visage has been a vocal supporter of the LGBTQ+ community and an [advocate](#) for HIV and AIDS support and care.



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“GMHC was always there,” Visage told GMHC during her speech. “Fighting, screaming, yelling—wanting more, wanting more answers, wanting better for humanity.”

Twin sisters Oni Blackstock, MD, MHSc, and Uché Blackstock, MD, were presented with the Judith Peabody Humanitarian Award. The physicians were honored for their roles as thought leaders in the areas of HIV and health equity as well for their HIV and AIDS advocacy. The sisters have long championed policies and programs that prioritize the needs of marginalized communities.



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The world’s first [HIV and AIDS](#) service organization, GMHC formed in 1981 from a meeting of 80 men in the apartment of writer Larry Kramer during which they brainstormed ways to raise money to research what was then referred to as a “gay cancer.” Since then, GMHC has made vital contributions to end the AIDS epidemic in New York City and nationwide.

GMHC presented the Corporate Impact Award to Betty Chiang, MD, the vice president of U.S. medical affairs and virology at [Gilead Sciences](#). Chiang acquired her expertise in global health via her nearly 20 years of hands-on involvement with the implementation of public health initiatives and the promotion of research at Gilead, where she has held various leadership roles in medical affairs since 2006.



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The evening featured stories from GMHC clients, singing by host [Cacophony Daniels](#) and DJ sets by [Joey With the Mustache](#) and Visage herself.

To learn more about the history and impact of GMHC, [click here](#). There, you'll find headlines such as "[Larry Kramer, the Iconic AIDS Activist, Remembered at Memorial Service](#)," "[AIDS Walk New York 2024 Raises Nearly \\$1.9M as HIV Funding Cuts Loom](#)" and "[Five New Laws in N.Y. Help Support HIV, PrEP and LGBTQ Issues](#)."